FREE CD WITH FULL SOFTWARE WORTH £590!

Practical internet™

101 MOST USEFUL WEB SITES

World-beating sites that save you time and money – p22

PLUS...

WINDOWS NET SECRETS

Get faster, stabler connections in minutes – p48

PLUS!

35 PAGES OF TUTORIALS

BROWSING

- Create your own browser
- Use free virus checkers
- Fight off privacy invaders
- Sort out your MP3 tracks

SITE BUILDING

- Get free 'sticky' site content
- Messageboards mastered!
- Design a memorable site logo
- Create slick Flash menus

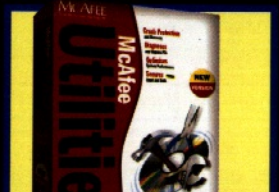
EXPERT HELP

- Outlook 2002 tips & tricks
- Pop-up windows in HTML
- Launch email ad campaigns
- Huge ADSL & ISP guide

PLUS! MAKE YOUR SITE 'STICKY' PAGE 42

LATEST NET GEAR ON TEST

SCANNERS



MCAFEE UTILITIES

WIN! A PC + SOFTWARE WORTH £3,700

SEPTEMBER 2001 | WITH FREE CD WORTH £590

£3.99 "excite, enthuse and inform"

9 771366 766022 58

PARAGON PUBLISHING

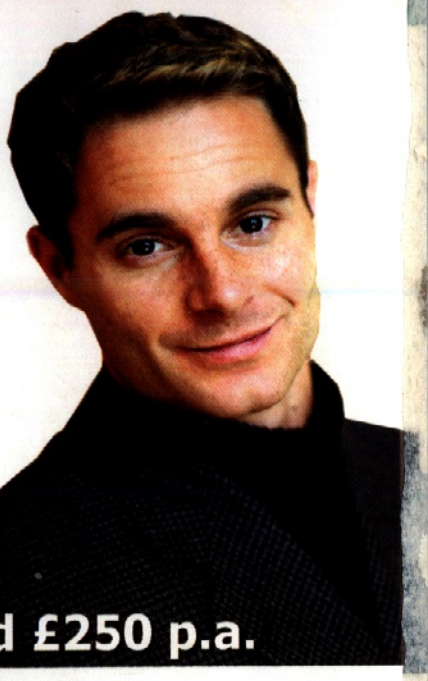
Issue 58

WebFusion®

Seriously Easy Web Hosting®

Sales Hotline
0115 9170000

For Resellers



£50 p.m. OR £500 p.a.

WebFusion Reseller

Reseller E-Commerce

add £250 p.a.

Both Packages:

- 2000 MB Fast UK Web Space
- 2 Virtual Servers included
- Additional VS £25 per Year
- State of the Art Data Centre
- High Speed Connections
- 2000 POP3 E-mail Boxes
- Detailed Online Help
- Phone and E-mail Support
- Regular Tape Backups
- Additional Options Available
- Same Hour Setup

All Your Accounts have:

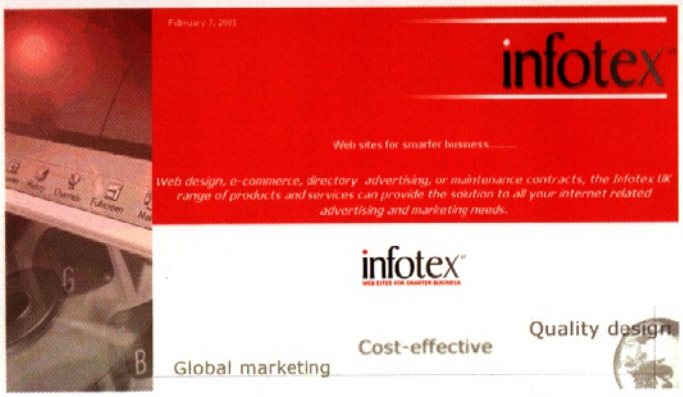
- Virtual Control Panel 2001
- Unlimited E-mail Forwarding
- Unlimited Mailing Lists
- Unlimited Autoresponders
- Full CGI-BIN
- 3GB Bandwidth per Month
- Miva Scripting Language
- MS FrontPage Extensions
- Active Server Pages
- MySQL Database
- PHP4 Scripting Language
- RealAudio and MP3
- Graphical Access Statistics
- SSH Telnet Access

E-Commerce Only:

Shopping Cart Solution pre-installed, fully integrated with secure server and ready to run

part of the Host Europe group of companies

SUCCESS STORIES



infotex UK
WEB SITES FOR SMARTER BUSINESS

Leading web design house, partners with WebFusion to offer high quality hosting solutions to Infotex customers, as a value added service

"As a leading web design consultancy, we service clients, large and small every year with cutting edge, affordable design and build services. We are often asked about web hosting. Clients are rightly concerned that their investment in an internet presence should not be compromised by inadequate, expensive or unreliable hosting.

By partnering with WebFusion to host our own clients, we are able to provide an additional, profitable service without incurring technical or infrastructure costs. WebFusion's service is of very high quality, and extremely flexible, so we can be confident that each client receives the best possible web hosting at the best possible price.

As well as a considerable additional revenue stream, partnering with WebFusion has rounded out our service offering, and opened up opportunities to provide total presence management on behalf of our clients, again, without any technical overhead to us.

Our experience of hosting our clients with WebFusion has been so successful that we now have our own server in their data centre, and in some ways the biggest advantage has been that the expansion of our business (and those of our clients!) has been made possible without changing web hosting provider."

www.infotex.co.uk — Will Stevens, MD Infotex UK

email us: sales@webfusion.co.uk

order online: www.webfusion.co.uk

Prices exclude VAT @ 17.5% We welcome all major debit and credit cards

WebFusion®

Seriously Easy Web Hosting®

Sales Hotline
0115 9170000

For Business

WebFusion Business Pro

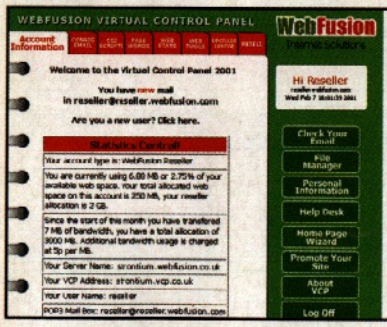
WebFusion E-Commerce

£199 PER YEAR

£499 PER YEAR

State of the Art Data Centre

Our state-of-the-art data centre is located within our facility in Nottingham. It houses our network of over 1200 servers. With 4 connections to the net, fire protection and a backup generator we are in a position to offer you the reliability you have been dreaming of!



Virtual Control Panel

The Virtual Control Panel 2001 (VCP) allows you to automatically control your web site without any knowledge of programming! You can install discussion boards & guest books in seconds, take complete control of all your e-mail, password protect directories and install FrontPage.

24/7 Technical Support

All WebFusion hosting packages come complete with 24/7/365 phone and e-mail technical support, plus an extensive online help and information system. Unlike our competitors we believe in providing the very best after sales care and technical support.

Both Packages:

- 100 MB Fast UK Web Space
- Own Domain Name
- State of the Art Data Centre
- High Speed Connections
- Virtual Control Panel 2001
- 100 POP3 E-mail Boxes
- Unlimited E-mail Forwarding
- Unlimited Mailing Lists
- Unlimited Autoresponders
- Full CGI-BIN
- 3GB Bandwidth per Month
- Free Use of Secure Server
- Miva Scripting Language
- MS FrontPage Extensions
- Active Server Pages
- MySQL Database
- PHP4 Scripting Language
- RealAudio and MP3
- Graphical Access Statistics
- SSH Telnet Access
- Detailed Online Help
- Phone and E-mail Support
- Regular Tape Backups
- Additional Options Available
- Money Back Guarantee
- Same Hour Setup

E-Commerce Only:

Shopping Cart Solution pre-installed, fully integrated with secure server and ready to run

email us: sales@webfusion.co.uk

order online: www.webfusion.co.uk

Prices exclude VAT @ 17.5% We welcome all major debit and credit cards

part of the Host Europe group of companies

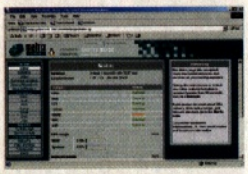
High Performance Web hosting

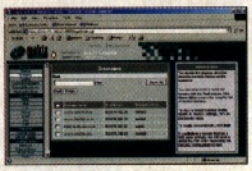
Data Centre
All servers are housed in our on-site multi million pound data centre built in association with the Intel corporation.

FROM ONLY
£89
Per Month
Instant setup on most models
No minimum contract

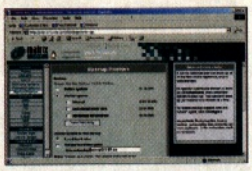
Host thousands of websites on a server dedicated to you

Matrix HOSTING APPLIANCE


Control all your domains


View server status

System logs


Automatically backup and restore

The Matrix Linux is a high performance, fully featured, web hosting appliance. It's the most scaleable dedicated server available for website hosting and ideal for hosting thousands of domain names, e-mail accounts and web applications.

The Matrix Linux has been co-developed by Matrix Servers Limited and the Intel Corporation. Included is the latest version of the Linux Operating System as well as Apache Webserver, a fully featured POP3 and SMTP server, DNS and full support for Perl, PHP and CGI scripting.

Absolutely no technical knowledge is required to fully leverage the power of the Matrix Linux as it comes pre-installed with a central, easy to use web based interface. You can use this unique interface to add and configure domain names, setup e-mail accounts, install features like Frontpage Extensions and more. Advanced users can of course use telnet to remotely login to the server with full administrative access.

Matrix Linux Hosting Appliance Features

Web Based Control Panel
- Easily create and configure new domains and e-mail accounts
- View vital statistics and information about your server
- Instantly install features such as Frontpage
- Create ODBC data sources
- Create separate logins for the web based interface for controlling individual domains
- Automatically backup your server

Features
- Latest Version of the Redhat Linux Operating System
- Apache Web Server
- Matrix Web Based Control Panel
- POP3 and SMTP mail server
- BIND DNS Server
- Telnet
- Perl, PHP, MySQL and PostgeSQL
- Support for Microsoft Active Server Pages
- Microsoft Frontpage Extensions
- Available with a variety of Intel Processors
- Comes with either 128, 256 or 512 MB memory

matrix SERVERS

Also available
The Matrix Windows
Based on the
Microsoft Windows 2000
operating system

fasthosts

The power behind web hosting
Call 01452 541260
www.fasthosts.co.uk

intel premier PROVIDER 2001

HOME PAGE

MEET THE TEAM...

THE PEOPLE WHO WRITE THE UK'S LEADING NET MAGAZINE, PRACTICAL INTERNET

Thomas Watson

TECHNICAL EDITOR

From modems and monitors to MP3s and MPEGs, Thomas is on the ball when it comes to the latest technologies.

James Thornton

STAFF WRITER

An ace at demystifying the Net's trickiest topics and getting to the heart of breaking news stories.

Clive Parker

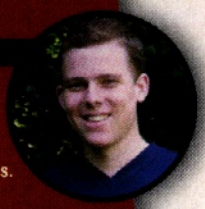
NET TECHNICAL SPECIALIST

A professional Web site designer and Internet stalwart, Clive answers your toughest tech questions.

James Seabright

WEB SITE DESIGN SPECIALIST

The man behind our Web site building advice, James provides tips on how to create perfect online pages.



Jo Cole

SENIOR SUB EDITOR

The backbone of the magazine, Jo ensures the magazine's production process runs smoothly and efficiently.

Paul Blachford

SENIOR DESIGNER

Paul's flair for turning pages of prose into colourful, eye-catching works of art is always evident in our features and tutorials.

Lee Watkins

ASSISTANT DESIGNER

With a sharp eye for detail and design, Lee ensures our pages are always easy-to-read and provide you with advice in the best way possible.

Use the Net to save time and money!

WELCOME TO SEPTEMBER'S *Practical Internet*, the UK's best hands-on Net magazine. As ever, we're filled to the brim with practical tips and advice to help you get more out of your Net connection.

Our cover feature, *101 Most Useful Web Sites*, points you in the direction of the world's best money-saving and time-saving sites, while *Windows Internet Secrets* shows you how to quickly get more stable, faster Net connections. *Make Your Site Sticky* gives you the low-down on all the best add-ons to attract visitors to your Web site and there's 35 pages of must-read, jargon-free tutorials for you to follow.

Remember that by buying *Practical Internet* you'll quickly recoup the cost of the cover price thanks to our valuable, money-saving advice. When you also consider that you get a CD with fully working software worth hundreds of pounds, you're definitely quids in! And, what's more, if you take out a subscription (see pages 114-115) you'll save more money too!

Mark Newman, Editor
mnewman@paragon.co.uk

Will today be the day...

from £99.99

RedHat Linux is the industry standard operating system for web hosting & Internet Services, serving some of the world's largest & most complex web sites. RedHat Linux has the power, reliability & value for money you have been looking for.

Linux Special

Celeron 667 MHz, 20GB UltraDMA Disk, 128MB SDRAM, 5GB Bandwidth p.m. RedHat Linux OS

Linux Professional

Intel Pentium III 800MHz, 2x20GB UltraDMA Disks, 256MB SDRAM, 15GB Bandwidth p.m. RedHat Linux OS

Linux Ultra II

Dual Intel Pentium III 1GHz, 2x18GB SCSI Disks running RAID1, 512MB SDRAM, 35GB Bandwidth p.m. RedHat Linux OS

from £199.99

Microsoft Windows is the choice of many small businesses & large corporations. Ideal for MSCPs, MCSEs, Visual Basic programmers & projects that require ASP, SQL or Office components. We manage hundreds of Windows servers, giving you confidence that your web server is in the best hands.

Windows Special

Celeron 667MHz, 20GB UltraDMA Disk, 128MB SDRAM, 5GB Bandwidth p.m., Windows 2000 or NT4

Windows Professional

Intel Pentium III 800MHz, 2x20GB UltraDMA Disks, 256MB SDRAM 15GB Bandwidth p.m. Windows 2000 or NT4

Windows Ultra II

Dual Intel Pentium III 1GHz, 2x18GB SCSI Disks running RAID1, 512MB SDRAM, 35GB Bandwidth p.m. Windows 2000 or NT4

from £99.99

The Single Site Server is as easy to use as a virtual server, including all the features you are familiar with, but on a stand alone dedicated web server that gives you the speed, scalability & redundancy that you have dreamed of.

Single Site Special

Celeron 667MHz, 20GB UltraDMA Disk, 128MB SDRAM, 5GB Bandwidth p.m. Linux OS with Virtual Control Panel

Single Site Professional

Intel Pentium III 800MHZ, 2x20GB UltraDMA Disks, 256MB SDRAM, 15GB Bandwidth p.m. Linux OS with Virtual Control Panel

Single Site Ultra II

Dual Intel Pentium III 1GHz, 2x18GB SCSI Disks running RAID1, 512MB SDRAM, 35GB Bandwidth p.m. Linux OS with Virtual Control Panel

from £99.99

The original 'Web-in-a-box' solution for thousands of companies. Easy to use & easy to manage with the highest dedicated support level available. As a Cobalt True Blue Diamond partner, our customers benefit from the lowest prices, advanced sales literature & technical expertise.

RaQ 4 128

10.2GB Disk
128MB SDRAM
5GB Bandwidth p.m.
Cobalt Linux OS

RaQ 4 256

20.4GB Disk
256MB SDRAM
15GB Bandwidth p.m.
Cobalt Linux OS

RAID RaQ 4 256

2x20GB Disks running RAID
256MB SDRAM
25GB Bandwidth p.m.
Cobalt Linux OS

www.dedicated-servers.co.uk
sales@dedicated-servers.co.uk

Host Europe

...you commit to success?

Sun microsystems

from £199.99

When it comes to server reliability & performance, Sun Microsystems is the market leader. Sun servers are built around the Sun Solaris operating system & are ideal for customers who need a seriously heavy duty UNIX system. Sun Servers are also ideal for hosting demanding web sites, e-commerce enabled web shops, complex databases or Internet portals.

Sun Netra X1 128

Sun Netra X1 System, 400MHz UltraSPARC-II CPU, 20GB 7200RPM EIDE Disk, 128MB Memory DIMMS, Solaris 8 Installed, 15GB Bandwidth p.m.

Sun Netra X1 512

Sun Netra X1 System, 400MHz UltraSPARC-II CPU, 20GB 7200RPM EIDE Disk, 512MB Memory DIMMS, Solaris 8 Installed, 25GB Bandwidth p.m.

Sun Netra

Sun Netra T1 Server, 440MHz UltraSPARC-II CPU with 2MB External Cache, 18GB 10000RPM UltraSCSI Disk, 512MB Memory, Solaris 7 Installed, 35GB Bandwidth p.m.

from £99.99

Locate your servers in our state of the art Data Centre. Simply choose between space for one server, a half rack or full rack of server space. We provide competitive bandwidth pricing, free reboots and an SLA.

Co-location Special

Rack space for your minitower or 19" rack server, 2 IP addresses, 5GB Bandwidth p.m.

Co-location Professional

Half rack/20 Us of 19" rack server space, 15 100Mb Switch Ports / 15 Power Sockets, up to 30 IP addresses, 40GB Bandwidth p.m.

Co-location Ultra

Full rack/40 Us of 19" rack server space, 23 100Mb Switch Ports / 23 Power Sockets, up to 60 IP addresses, 65GB Bandwidth p.m.

PLUS PACKAGE

only £199.99

For a **complete** solution to your Web hosting requirements, consider the benefits of adding the **Plus** package to your Dedicated Server. Available across all our Dedicated Servers, the **Plus** package offers outstanding value for money and total peace of mind:

Firewall
The Dedicated Servers Firewall product allows customers to protect their machine against unwanted visitors. Via a web based control panel, you have the ability to allow or deny visitors based on rules that you set. You can add any number of rules that you wish to your Firewall system.

Backup
An important decision when choosing your Dedicated Server is considering how you will back up the data on your new machine. Even though we use the best hardware that is available for all our servers, disks can occasionally fail, and in some cases the data on them may be lost. We strongly recommend our backup solutions using StorageTek tape libraries. This service includes: configuration of server side backup routine, 10GB of backup, tapes stored securly on site in a large fireproof safe, and free recovery of data in the event of data loss.

Advanced server monitoring
For customers who require a more advanced level of server monitoring, upgrade to our Advanced Server Management product. This product allows you to monitor any number of services on your server including: Telnet, POP3 EMail, Web Server, FTP Server, Domain Name Server, Secure Web Server, SSH, Ping. You may also configure any number of additional services and decide how you want to be notified of a service failure, either EMail or SMS. Control this account feature in your Dedicated Control Panel.

Available as standard with all our Dedicated Servers is our guranteed Service Level Agreement (SLA).

We pride ourselves on the highest levels of customer service & quality assurance, which is highlighted in four benefits of our SLA:

30 Minute Reboot Guarantee
Should your server stop responding, just visit our web based reboot request form to get your server rebooted, within 30 minutes, 24/7, 365 days a year.

99% Connectivity - Money Back Guarantee
We guarantee that our network will be available at least 99% of the time.

Prices Frozen - Forever!
We guarantee never to put your prices up, ever, even if prices change for new customers.

Bandwidth Guarantee
Unlike some of our competitors, we do not oversell bandwidth. At Dedicated Servers we guarantee that we have 1:1 contention ratio on bandwidth. This means that we will always have enough bandwidth to service every single customer at their full capacity.

GUARANTEED SLA GUARANTEED

0870 012 6600

PRICES EXCLUDE VAT AT 17.5% AND SETUP WHERE APPLICABLE. ALL TRADEMARKS ACKNOWLEDGED. E&OE

On sale 23 August – 19 September 2001

CONTENTS ISSUE 58

What's on the CD

130 on the CD

Browsing
Adobe Acrobat Reader ..... Freeware
AllMouse2 ..... Freeware
ChargeMeter ..... Freeware
Compass 2.80 ..... 30-day trial
Download Accelerator 5 ..... Freeware
ePrompter 1.04 ..... Freeware
Favorites to HTML ..... Freeware
Go!Zilla 3.9 ..... Freeware
IE5 Web Accessories ..... Freeware
Internet Explorer 5.5 ..... Freeware
Netscape 6 ..... Freeware
Odigo 3.1 ..... Freeware
Opera 5.11 ..... 30-day trial
Outlook Express 5 ..... Freeware
RealPlayer 8 ..... Freeware
Shockwave Player ..... Freeware
Spam Buster 1.9 ..... Freeware
Web Stripper ..... Freeware
WinZip 8 ..... Freeware

Your Business Online
Comparrison Shopper ..... Freeware
Credit Crad Verifier ..... Freeware.
Invoice Store 4.0 ..... Shareware
Promotion Pro 4.6 ..... Freeware
ShopFactory 4.4 ..... 30-day trial

Full products
2,500 Free Photos ..... Full product
Satori Photo XL ..... Full product
TextNow! ..... Full product

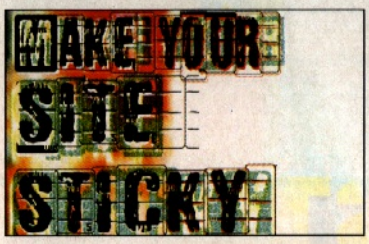
ISP
Abel Gratis ..... Free Internet access

Net workshop
Flash 5 ..... 30-day trial
Flash demo ..... demo
MP3 CD Orginiser ..... Freeware
Opera 5.12 ..... 30-day trial
Satori Photo XL ..... Full product

Site building
1st Page 2000 ..... Freeware
AudioGrabber ..... Freeware
CoffeeCup Firestarter ..... Shareware
Flash 5 ..... 30-day trial
FlashWizard 2.0 ..... Freeware
Font Creator ..... 30-day trial
Gate Keeper 3.2 ..... Freeware
HTML Optimizer ..... Freeware
Jpeg Cleaner 2.2 ..... Freeware
MiniMapper Plus ..... Freeware
PhotoSuite 4 ..... 30-day trial
Text2Web ..... Freeware
Traffic Seeker Pro 3.72 ..... Shareware
X Cleaner ..... Freeware

PLEASE NOTE, this issue's CD is PC ONLY

Features in this issue:

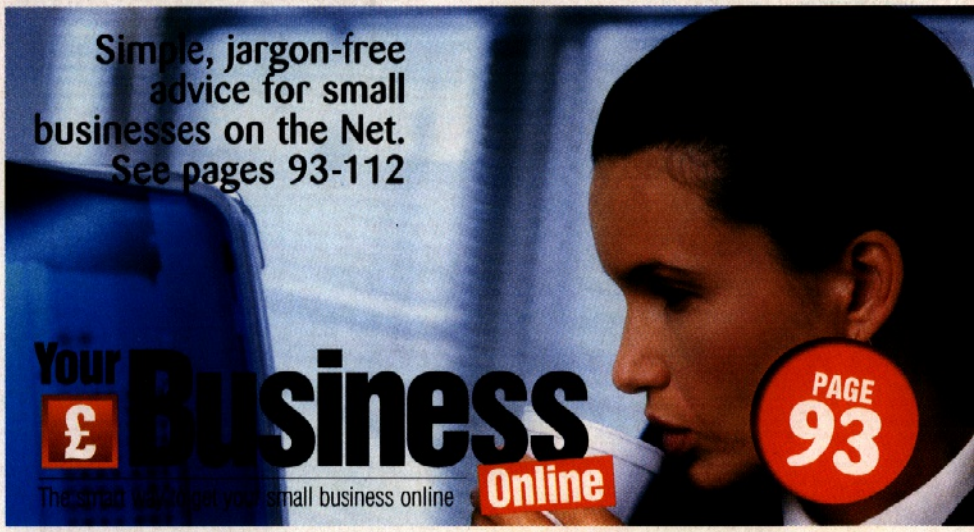


MAKE YOUR SITE STICKY

42 | To get repeat visits from people, you site needs to be something special. We tell you of add-ons that will make you site sticky

WINDOWS INTERNET SECRETS

48 | Make sure that you get the very best out of your Windows Internet connection by following our handy tips



In the news this issue

10 infonation

Keep yourself up-to-date with what's happening on the World Wide Web. Here's the news...

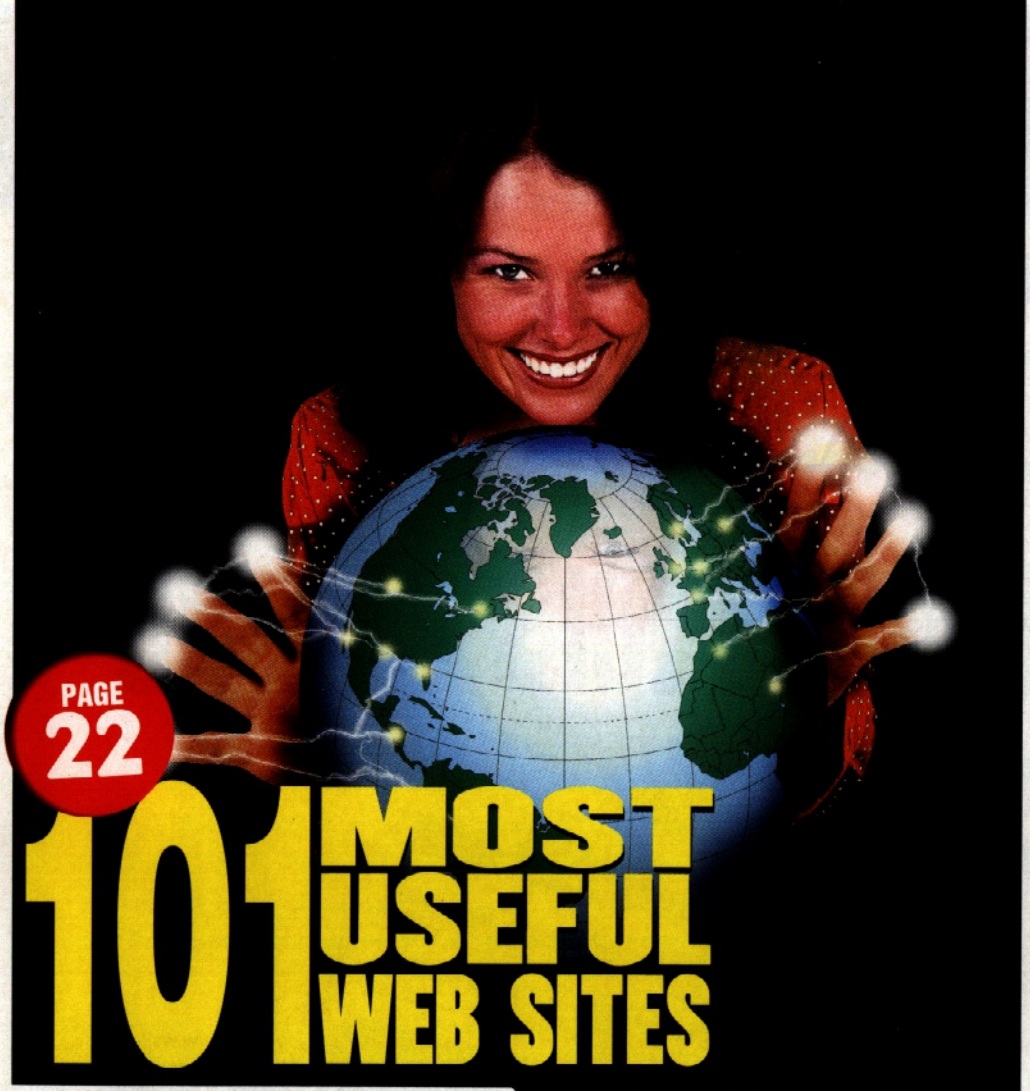
10 Content charges
11 Net campaign
12 Stat Attack
14 Net Watch
14 Celeb Bookmarks
16 Hardwired
16 New sites

Reviewed in this issue

117 on test

Our reviews section tests new equipment for Net users

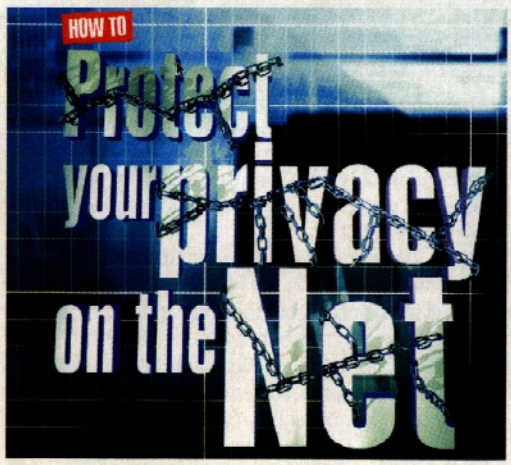
118 McAfee Utilities
120 HTML Tutor
121 MediaStudio Pro 6.5
122 Wacom Graphics Tablet
124 Zip 250
125 Kodak DX3500



PAGE 22

101 MOST USEFUL WEB SITES

SAVE TIME AND MONEY WITH THESE WORLD-BEATING WEB SITES



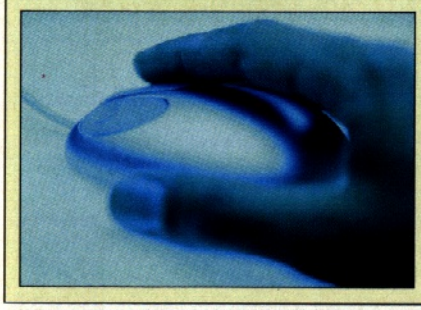
HOW TO...
Protect your privacy on the Net

32 | There are some simple steps you can take to ensure that your PC stays secure on the Net

Buyers' guide

136 which isp?

136 ISP Directory: Over 350 ISPs compared, plus an in-depth look at specific services and the latest ISP news



Regulars

Backchat 18
Find out what other readers think about the Net on our letters page. Includes Web Watchdog

Software Focus: Outlook 2002 38
Find out about the latest version of Outlook

Win an Internet ready PC 90
Enter our competition to win a great PC

Win £3,000 of eCommerce software 91
Six copies of NetShop up for grabs

Subscribe today and save! 114
Subscribe to make sure you never miss an issue – and save yourself some dosh into the bargain!

Disconnecting 162
Jo Chipchase asks whether the Internet will spawn a wave of paedophilia

Tutorials in this issue

Net Workshop

In this section:

LOOKING TO BUILD a fantastic Web site or add some pizazz to Web browsing? This is the section of the magazine for you

Tutorials

PROJECT 1 TUTORIAL
Track down PC viruses 56
Scan your PC for viruses online

PROJECT 2 TUTORIAL
Create an online desktop 58
Organise your information online

PROJECT 3 TUTORIAL
Organise your MP3s 60
Make sure your MP3s are easy to find

PROJECT 4 TUTORIAL
Create a logo for your site 62
Turn your site heading into something special

PROJECT 5 TUTORIAL
Build your own browser 64
Create a customised version of Opera

PROJECT 6 TUTORIAL
Master your Address Book 68
Send multiple emails easily

PROJECT 7 TUTORIAL
Create a Favicon for your site 69
Icons that show in your visitor's Favorites

PROJECT 8 TUTORIAL
Online bulletin boards 70
Adding a board to your site

PROJECT 9 TUTORIAL
Easy menus in Flash 74
Create simple animated drop down menus

HOME IMPROVEMENT
Create pop-up windows 76
How to create eye-catching windows

infonation

THE COMPLETE INSIGHT INTO ALL THINGS INTERNET

Online newspapers charge for content

ARE FREE SERVICES ON THE NET COMING TO AN END?

SEVERAL OF THE UK's most popular online newspapers have begun charging visitors to access content on their sites, as fears grow over the rise of subscription services.

Following decisions by *The Times* and *The Telegraph* to introduce pay-for services, *The Guardian* (**www.guardian.co.uk**) is considering charging for access to the online version of its Media section. These latest developments represent a general shift towards subscription services and it is expected that many newspapers will start charging for information which people need to do their jobs, or content such as games and puzzles.

The Times (**www.thetimes.co.uk**) has already announced it will launch a members-only club, charging £10 a year for access to its popular online crossword, with other pre-paid services to follow. *The Telegraph* (**www.telegraph.co.uk**) has followed suit by introducing a £5 charge for its online fantasy football game.

Fee not free

The recent changes could mark the beginning of the end for some free newspaper content on the Net, according to analysts. Jannie Cahill of Internet research group Netvalue (**www.netvalue.com**) said: "Most online newspaper sites will inevitably have to adopt a model of charging for premium content.

"Increased competition and the slump in online advertising means that publishers have been forced to find additional revenue streams."

Currently, the only news site to have built a successful subscription model is the *Wall Street Journal* (**www.wsj.com**). However, *The Telegraph* has not ruled out the possibility of becoming fully subscription- based in the future.

"It is unlikely that all newspapers would switch to a subscription-only model, as the danger for publishers would be the loss of their customer base," said Cahill.

Katie Vanneck, the publisher of Times online, insists that the paper is not planning to charge for basic new access, but the archive may be set for charges in the future. It is thought this move is an attempt to recover funds lost in other online ventures, such as the unsuccessful Firedup.com launch, and a reaction to the general decline in online advertising profits.

ONLINE WEB BUILDING SERVICE STARTS CHARGING

IT'S NOT ONLY online newspapers that are beginning to charge users for services that have traditionally been available for free. Moonfruit (**www.moonfruit.com**) is the latest company to jump on the subscription bandwagon and has slapped on a charge for users of SiteMaker, its popular online Web building service. The site currently has 300,000 registered users who have, up until now, been able to produce and host their own sites for no cost. However, existing users will now be asked to pay either £34.99 a year or £3.99 a month for the same service.

Until now Moonfruit had been looking for a buyer and the popularity of the service meant that it was no longer financially viable for them to offer a free service.

Wendy Tam, Chief Executive of Moonfruit said: "To continue the development of the product and improve the user-experience through the introduction of new templates and technology requires a huge amount of resources, it is something we can only do by charging people."

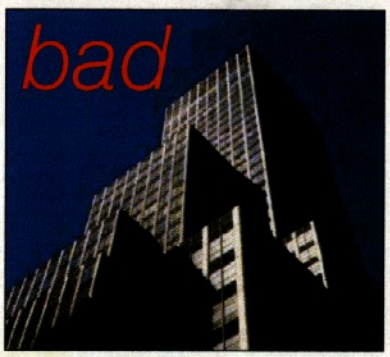
"Our investors share the view that the trend of paying for premium sites will soon cross the Atlantic."

BANISH FRIDAY WORK FOREVER!

ONLINE PETITION DEMANDS SHORTER WORKING WEEK

A NEW WEB site has been set up to campaign for workers to knock off at lunchtime on Fridays.

LetsGetItOff.com is calling for the working week to finish at noon on a Friday, allowing employees to start their weekend festivities early, and is encouraging supporters to sign up online. Unsurprisingly, the petition has proved very popular indeed and has so far attracted around 15,000 signatures.



The campaigners hope to reach a target of 100,000 names, at which point, the petition will be presented to 10 Downing Street. "People in the UK work the longest hours in Europe and we think they deserve a break," said a spokesperson for the campaign.

"We're asking the government to give us a completely work-free Friday afternoon, without any reduction in pay."

Wishful thinking perhaps, and as the FAQ section of the site admits "there's slightly more chance of David Icke proving that Prince Philip is a giant lizard but at least we're both trying." To register your vote for the campaign visit **www.letsgetitoff.com**.

DEMON DOES IT

LANDMARK RULING RECOGNISES THAT ISPS HAVE NO CONTROL OVER THIRD-PARTY CONTENT

DEMON INTERNET HAS successfully challenged the injunction banning the publication of the names and whereabouts of the James Bulger killers on the Internet.

The ruling protects ISPs from legal liability if their customers break the injunction. The outcome of the case can be seen as legal acknowledgement of the technical limitations that prevent ISPs from being responsible for any content.

The EC Directive on electronic commerce also seeks to protect ISPs for legal issues concerning their customers' content. Soon to be enforced in British national law, the directive says there is no obligation for ISPs to police content.

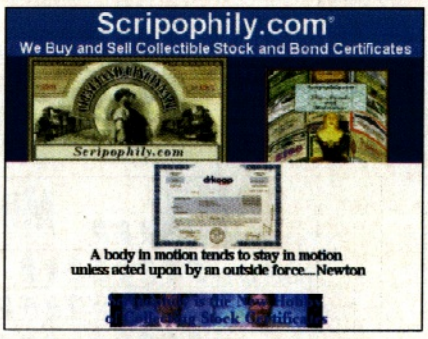
Paper money

NET GAINS FROM DOTCOM SHARE'S PAPER PROFITS

A NEW WAVE of Net investors are taking the theory that shares in Net companies are worth less than the paper they are printed on quite literally.

Like a grown-up version of Pokémon cards, the market for collecting and trading stock certificates is the latest dotcom craze. Some even predict that items from the 'dotcom gold rush' era will some day be sought-after museum pieces, meaning the share certificates will become much more valuable than the shares of the oft-defunct ebusinesses they represent.

There's now even a Web site dedicated to this new craze. At Scripophily.com (**www.scripophily.com**) you can buy stock certificates from dead dotcoms such as eToys.com, eGames, iVillage and Webvan Group – for a price.



Scripophily.com is dedicated to the latest dotcom craze of collecting share certificates.

One site whose shares could soon become collectors items is Scoot.com. The online directory is facing closure after its shares plummeted. It has also axed 285 jobs and quit plans for a European expansion amid concerns over its future.

news in brief

INTERNET NEWS SNIPPETS

- Proving that there's still a strong market for cherished domain names, one plucky computer consultant is toasting his good fortune after selling three domain names for £7,000. Forty-year-old Robin Jones of Coventry bought the name "Xirrus.com" last year along with the .co.uk and .net equivalents "for peanuts" from **www.names123.com**, after setting up a small computer consultancy of the same name.

- **Multimap (www.multimap.com) has added street-level maps across 12 European countries to its popular mapping site. Visitors can now access detailed street maps of countries including France, Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands simply by entering a place name, street name or postcode. The service will soon be extended to include travel directions, weather reports and aerial images.**

- Telewest has come up with a unique new way of promoting its broadband service – by issuing people with an Internet speeding violation. The spoof ticket is designed to highlight the benefits of the company's high speed service, Blueyonder (**www.blueyonder.co.uk**). Following its joint agreement with ntl to raise public awareness of the benefits of broadband, the marketing campaign promotes the slogan "speed restrictions do not apply".

- **The Inland Revenue has picked up the Web award that no-one wanted at the third annual New Statesman New Media Awards. The site (www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk) scooped the 'Raspberry Award' for the worst Web site ever seen by the judges. The Overall Merit Award at the ceremony went to Fax Your MP (www.faxyourmp.com), shown above, a site that enables visitors to raise issues with their local politician.**

- Apple has officially launched what it is calling the "fastest Macs ever" at the company's MacWorld Expo event. The new line of Power Mac G4s machines come with 867MHz and dual 800MHz processors, a 56K internal modem and feature Apple's revolutionary SuperDrive which allows users to burn DVDs. Details of the new range are available from the Apple Store at **www.apple.com/ukstore**.

news in brief

A BRIEF LOOK AT THE MOST HAPPENING NET STORIES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

☐ People with health concerns can now get sound medical advice online thanks to the launch of the first site in the UK to be solely written and reviewed by healthcare professionals. Well-aware (**www.well-aware.co.uk**) has been set up by NHS doctor Catherine Minto who was frustrated by the quality of health information currently available on the Web. The site includes details of alternative and complementary therapies as well as traditional methods.

☐ **The ruling Taliban movement in Afghanistan has banned the use of the Internet to stop 'immoral material' getting into the country. The ban applies to everyone, including workers in government offices. According to the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press (AIP), Foreign Minister Maulvi Wakil Ahmad Muttawakil said: "We want to establish a system in Afghanistan through which we can control all those things that are wrong, obscene, immoral and against Islam."**

☐ Cash-savvy Net users can now sort out their finances online thanks to Yell.com. The new interactive guide at **www.yell.com/finance** offers advice and information on a range of issues such as mortgages, current accounts, savings and loans. Users can even request email alerts on market rates, new product launches and the best savings accounts.

☐ **A town in England is set to unveil the world's most technologically advanced park bench. Net users will soon be able to plug their laptops into the bench in Bury St. Edmunds, Norfolk, as part of a drive by Microsoft (www.microsoft.com) to encourage Internet use in "more natural and organic places."**

☐ Film buffs can now check out information on all their favourite flicks thanks to the launch of the world's largest online movie resource. CN Movies (**www.cnmovies.com**) is a comprehensive guide to over 321,000 films and is stocked with information on cinema history, film techniques, studios and production companies, and an A-Z of actors, producers and directors.

HOLLYWOOD HITS PIRATED ONLINE

BRIT FLICK *SNATCH* TOPS LIST OF FILMS DOWNLOADED IN JUNE

THE LATEST CINEMA releases are being pirated more and more on the Net, according to digital copyright enforcer MediaForce.

Three current box office hits – *Tomb Raider*, *Shrek* and *Pearl Harbour* – were among the most-pirated movies, while the top-pirated film on the Web for June was *Snatch*. The New York-based company estimated the list incorporates about a million pirated copies for June.

Aaron Fessler, Chief Executive of the MediaForce, says the list "demonstrates that online movie piracy is a very real threat to the movie production industry, especially when three of our top 10 are current, first-run production movies. This isn't a real abstract format where people are trading third-run movies. This is current-production stuff out there and freely available."

Fessler believes that movie piracy is going to be a "massive, massive" problem in the coming months, as the tools and software that convert movies from DVD format into a viewable, pirated format become even easier to use.

Take your pic

THE HIGH STREET photo booth could become a thing of the past thanks to the launch of a new online passport photo service.

PasPic (**www.paspic.com**) becomes the Net's first e-photo booth and allows users to upload digital photographs to the site for free before ordering official passport-size pictures to be developed and sent out.

Registration, uploading and storage are free and the only charge for the service is 75p for six photos plus postage and packing. The service also offers a free scanning and uploading service for users without digital cameras or scanners.

XARA'S NEW DIMENSION

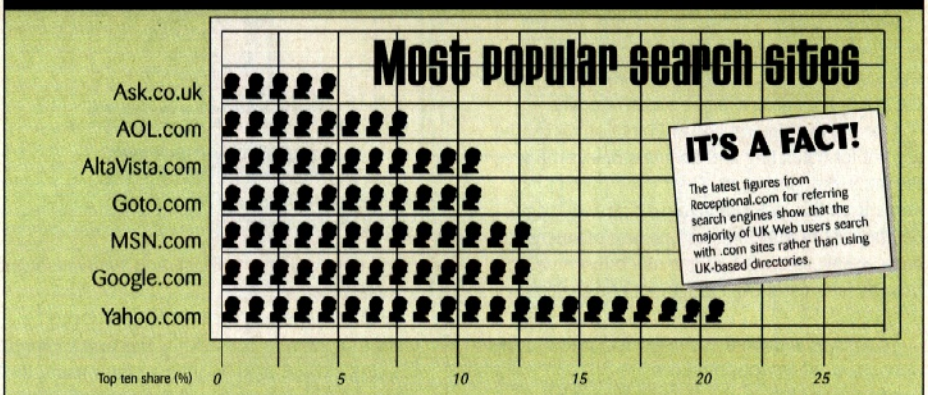
BUDDING WEB BUILDERS can now get online to test drive the latest 3D graphics software from Xara.

The 3D Heading Maker lets potential customers try out Xara3D to create, customise and save text-based graphics live on a Web page at **www.xara3d.com**. Visitors can get a feel for the software's capabilities by altering the font, size, and style of their 3D text, before saving the result.

The full version of Xara3D is available for $39 and lets users create their own styles, including animated 3D headings, and provides the ability to change the background, texture and light colours. It also includes an option for positioning the image in 3-D space by dragging it on-screen.

stat attack

AS THE NEW TEOMA SEARCH ENGINE HITS THE WEB (SEE PAGE 16) WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE NATION'S CURRENT FAVOURITE SITE-FINDING RESOURCES



IT'S A FACT!

The latest figures from Receptional.com for referring search engines show that the majority of UK Web users search with .com sites rather than using UK-based directories.

Source: Receptional.com (www.receptional.com)

NEW

£12.99

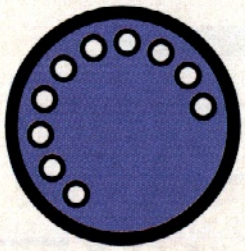
per month

Internet access with NO call costs

24/7 unmetered Internet access for only £12.99/month

No call costs and fast Internet access - welcome to 0800 Dial, the name that's making the web **easier** and **truly affordable**.
For only £12.99 per month you can enjoy the Internet without worrying about your phone bill - because when you access the Internet through 0800 Dial there are **NO call charges** and there's nothing extra to pay. That's right, your monthly subscription covers everything!
What's more, you get 10mb of **free** web space to use, and 15 **free** email addresses, plus access to newsgroups - all easily set up through your very own 0800 Dial desktop launcher...

Start really enjoying the Internet - surf along to
www.0800dial.com



0800dial.com™

Unmetered Internet access you can count on

Serving 35,000 users throughout the UK and beyond

Terms and conditions apply when registering for your new account. See web site for full terms and conditions. Minimum agreement applies. Part of the UK Fantastic group. Telephone 0870 740 7777

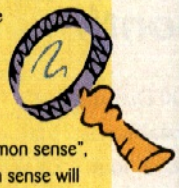
sign-up online now - immediate account activation

Net WATCH

Internet Freedom's Chris Ellison casts a watchful eye on the latest online developments

LAST JULY, BRITISH courts slapped an injunction on the media to prevent the new names or whereabouts of the James Bulger killers from being revealed. The Internet industry immediately panicked: what if someone was to post the details on the Net? Would ISPs be prosecuted for breaking the injunction?

Last year the Demon versus Godfrey case set a precedent that left ISPs potentially liable for libellous content posted by their customers. In the light of this, Demon immediately went to the High Court and successfully had the injunction amended. Now ISPs are only liable if they fail to take "all reasonable steps" to prevent the publication of the banned material. Critics were quick to point out that taking preventative "reasonable steps" meant they would still have to police content on the Net or risk prosecution.



The amendment was heralded as a "victory for common sense", which in part it is. But common sense will also tell you that censoring the identities of the Bulger killers in this way is a waste of time. Firstly, an injunction in the UK does not prevent overseas media from publishing the information. Secondly, no amount of censorship can protect Venables and Thompson from those determined to seek retribution. Venables and Thompson may need some physical protection. But censoring the Net will offer them none.

*Internet Freedom can be contacted at **campaign@netfreedom.org**. The campaign's Web site is at **www.netfreedom.org***

I'll be there for .eu

EURO-FRIENDLY DOMAIN NAME ON THE CARDS

A NEW .EU top level domain name for Europe is now closer to becoming a reality, with a report finalised by the European Council.

The first official report from the European Parliament on the matter is expected shortly, with early next year pencilled in as the launch date.

The European Council says that it will "take the necessary measures to ensure that the .eu top level domain will be available to users as soon as possible." It is hoped that the new domain will benefit the identity of pan-European businesses and be a boost to Europe's Internet industry as a whole.

ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) is currently in the process of creating other new domain names such as .biz, .name, .museum, .pro, .aero, .coop and .info.

The .eu domain name could bring a boost to the Internet industry within the European Union

Bamber Gascoigne CELEBRITY BOOKMARKS

THE FORMER *UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE* PRESENTER TELLS US ABOUT HIS NEW WEB SITE

How long have you been online?
Probably about three or four years. I went off the Internet when I first tried it because I thought a lot of it was such rubbish. The search engines weren't nearly so good then and it seemed to be very hard to find a way through the rubbish. But it's getting better all the time.

What one thing would you use the Internet for, if nothing else worked?
It would be looking for very unusual things. For example, my wife had to paint an image which was a stag beetle by the artist Durer. Now she'd lost her postcard of it so I said: 'Let's have a look on the Internet'. Two hits came up, both with a very good reproduction of it. I printed it out and she was back in the studio in two minutes painting it.

Your site, HistoryWorld.net, is extremely comprehensive. What's your favourite part of it?
What I really love is that you can ask what's happening in any year, in any context.

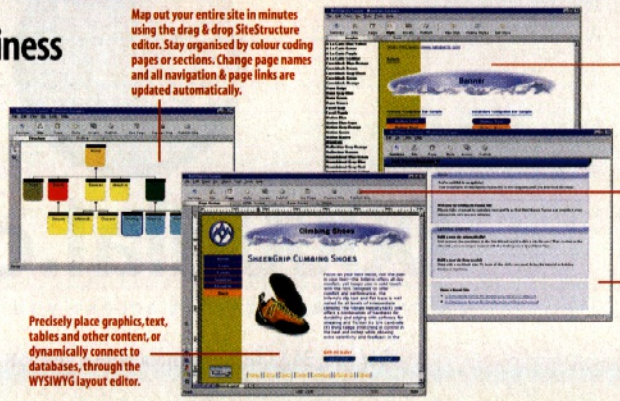
For example, I looked up what was happening in the same year as Newton discovered gravity. So I typed this in, and found it was the same year that somebody in London first tried the process of blood transfusion, passing blood from one dog to another through a goose's quill. Understandably, the poor dog that was losing the blood died, but what was interesting was the dog that was receiving the blood was very healthy. Only a database can throw up the fact that all of this was happening at the same time.

Is the site free?
At the moment, yes. However, the present requirement for all Web sites to be free is non-sustainable. The game is just to have a good site and lots of visitors until such a time as we can charge. I hope that charges will not be made via credit cards, but by micropayments – tiny sums of money passing between computers. That will liberate the Net, I think. If I visit a site asking £29.99 for subscription, I won't go there. But if it said have a look and it will cost you tuppence for five minutes I'd certainly have a look.

NetObjects Fusion MX

The choice for small business

NetObjects Fusion is the fastest, easiest way to plan, build, manage, and update your Web sites. For the first-time user who has never built a site there are intuitive wizards and professional templates that guide you through the building process. More experienced users will find NetObjects Fusion MX has the power, flexibility, and control they need to add sophisticated business functionality.



Map out your entire site in minutes using the drag & drop SiteStructure editor. Stay organised by colour coding pages or sections. Change page names and all navigation & page links are updated automatically.

Use the new Online Style Viewer to choose from over 200 SiteStyles or customise your own. Plus, receive 110 new and unique SiteStyles free of charge only from RedLeaf.

Publish your site with one click from Site or Page view.

A powerful array of online services at your fingertips. Obtain new content for your site, sign up for hosting, monitor site traffic, or build site relationships with customers using our integrated browser environment.

Precisely place graphics, text, tables and other content, or dynamically connect to databases, through the WYSIWYG layout editor.

RedLeaf Limited · 023 8081 7700 · www.redleaf.co.uk sales · training · design · development

Need to build a website?

It's everything you need!

ecBuilder Pro 6.0 is essential for any business which needs to create a professional looking website, maintain it regularly, and then keep track of customers and their orders.

Use ecBuilder Pro to construct:

- a website and online store with real–time secure credit card transactions
- an online store which integrates seamlessly into an existing website
- a website in many different languages
- a brochureware website (without an online store)
- a website complete with post–sales management of customers and their orders

ecBuilder Pro uses industry standard security and encryption for orders, enquiries, and real–time credit card transactions.

Any URL, any ISP

You also have complete freedom to use your own URL (domain address), and to host your website with any ISP (Internet Service Provider) you choose.

Your online store catalogue can have an unlimited number of items, tiers, and sections. All items in your online store can be illustrated with static and animated graphics, audio files, and video files. And by adding HTML, you can enhance your products and services even more.

It's flexible and grows with your business

ecBuilder Pro has been designed for all users, from complete beginners to more advanced users with some technical knowledge. Whatever your skill level, it's easy to build a professional looking website.

There are wizards and templates to guide you through building web pages, adding text and graphics, compiling a product catalogue, previewing the site, and then publishing it.

The program is flexible and customisable so your website can grow with your business, or as your technical knowledge increases. This complete flexibility makes it ideal for any type or size of business.

Complete with order management

ecBuilder Pro is accompanied by order management software. This enables you to keep track of all your orders and enquiries, whether you're receiving two or 200 of them each day. Order management software enables you to process and track every order, manage your customer and prospect information, print out documentation and address labels, and follow–up sales leads and enquiries easily and efficiently.

ecBuilder
Developer's Edition

Do you undertake multiple web projects? With ecBuilder Developer's Edition you will save time and provide greater value for your clients. ecBuilder Developer's Edition lets you rapidly provide the ecommerce functionality your clients want, while allowing you to focus on what you do best – site development and design. Find new clients and expand your service offerings by using ecBuilder Developer's Edition.

Please send me a free trial CD

☐ I need to build an ecommerce website

☐ I am a web developer and need to build multiple websites

ecBuilder Pro 6.0

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____ Postcode: _____

Tel: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

PI08/01

For further information about ecBuilder Pro 6.0 complete and return this coupon

Multiactive Software Ltd
Bridge House, Bridge Avenue
Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1RR
England

Tel: +44 (0)1628 587777
Fax: +44 (0)1628 587778
Email: info@multiactive.co.uk
Web: www.multiactive.co.uk

Why not complete the coupon and fax the whole page to us?

Alternatively download this and other trial products from: www.multiactive.co.uk

©2001 Multiactive Software

multiactive.

news in brief

A LOOK AT THE LATEST INTERNET NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

☐ Anyone getting *Big Brother* withdrawl symptoms can satisfy their prying urges by visiting a farmyard version of the hit show. 'Pig Brother' tracks the antics of five hopeful swines with a live round-the-clock Webcast at **www.somersetorganics.co.uk**. The site lets viewers vote off their least favourite porkers during the show's four week run. William Hill (**www.williamhill.co.uk**) currently has Blair Pig as the 2/1 favourite.

☐ **You now get free tickets to watch popular comedy shows being recorded, courtesy of TVrecordings.com (www.tvrecordings.com). The site is the first in the UK to give away free TV audience tickets which can be booked and printed online. Among the programmes featured is *The Sketch Show*, a new comedy penned by Steve Coogan which is being filmed weekly from 30 August to 27 September.**

☐ Footie fans can celebrate the dawn of the new season by using their wits and joining the new Sky Sports Football Manager game. The service combines a standalone PC game with an integrated Web site and is available for a monthly subscription of £6.99. Wannabie Alex Fergusons should visit **www.nisports.com/prereg** to pre-register.

SEEK AND FIND!

FINDING THINGS ON THE WEB JUST GOT FASTER AND EASIER AFTER LAUNCH OF TEOMA SITE

AT LAST, GOOGLE has a genuine contender to its crown as 'king of the search engines'. Teoma (**www.teoma.com**) promises to give users the ability to quickly hunt down the most useful sites to their chosen search subject.

Because of the way it works, the search engine could become the ideal search tool if you know what you're looking for online. Teoma's effectiveness comes from the way it takes your search string and then trawls through the Net with a fine-toothed comb looking for sites that match these words. It then calculates its rankings by counting up the number of links within these sites to a particular site. So in effect, it is asking all the experts on a certain subject who they think is the most knowledgeable out of all them all.

The site also makes for a great academic resource.

Need a break?

FLEE THE COUNTRY ON THE CHEAP BY KEEPING TABS ON LATE HOLIDAY DEALS

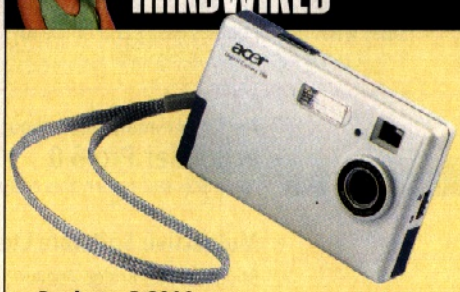
AS THE SUMMER draws to an abrupt end, Internet sun seekers can now keep track of the latest foreign holiday deals and charter flights with Travelcare's brand new Price Checker service at **www.travelcareonline.com**. The service is the first of its kind to keep Net users electronically posted on price fluctuations and availability of late holidays and flight bargains.

Users can access details of flights and vacations to thousands of destinations across the globe.

They can then register their interest in up to ten of the most appealing deals, and the site keeps them automatically updated on any changes that are made to the price or availability by email.

This saves the disappointment of finding a good deal on the Net, going away to seek out a better offer then returning only to find it's already been snapped up.

HARDWIRED



Product: DC300
Price: £100 approx.
Contact: www.acercm.co.uk

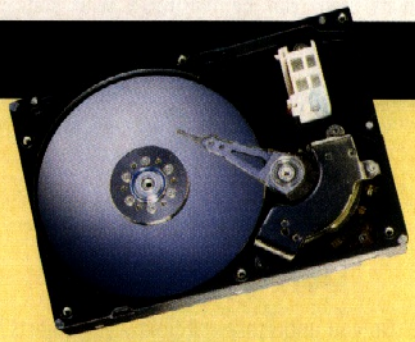
THREE AND EASY

IF THREE IS the magic number, this snappy ultra-thin device from Acer is a veritable box of tricks. Its lightweight, 2cm thick frame houses the combined features of a digital camera, video camera and PC camera. The DC300 has 8Mb of onboard memory which can store up to 128 piccies and boasts a refresh rate of up to 30 frames a second in PC mode.

Product: GPRS Mondo
Price: £350-£600 (on phone contract)
Contact: www.trium.net

POCKET OFFICE

TRIUM HAS INTRODUCED what it is calling the world's first 'truly mobile office'. The GPRS version of the sleek, chic Mondo provides an 'always on' connection to the Net. Using Microsoft's Pocket PC platform, the touchscreen device lets you tap into tools including email, calendar, contacts and pocket versions of Word, Internet Explorer and Excel.



Product: WD Caviar
Price: £212+VAT
Contact: www.westerndigital.com

SPACE STATION

IF YOU FIND your desktop PC is struggling with all the digital photos and MP3s you've been ramming into it, it's high time you got some more storage space. This high-performance desktop hard drive offers a cavernous 100Gb of space allowing it to store 1,800 digital photos, 4 hours of digital video, 40 hours of music downloads and 30 software programs. Phew!

TOWERCHAT

ADD A NEW DIMENSION TO YOUR ONLINE CHATTING EXPERIENCE

INTERNET CHAT SITES are increasingly becoming more exciting and interactive places to hang out, as the new Tower Chat (**www.towerchat.com**) site proves. The site lets you create your own identity in the form of a 3D avatar, whose appearance can be customised to match the appearance of the user (or disguise it, as the case may be!).

The chats are staged in a vibrant 3-D environment where you can meet people from all over the world while listening to streaming music in the bar, dance rooms or the Penthouse.

Tower Chat also includes an interior design tool, allowing you to transform the decor of each of the rooms in your own online apartment. When you meet some cyber-soulmates you can then invite them back to your place or arrange to meet them later in the Tower.

LET'S BUILD IT

DON YOUR HARD HAT AND GET READY TO MAKE SOME HOME IMPROVEMENTS

PROMISING TO MAKE you quick on the draw when dealing with cowboy builders, Lets Build It (**www.letsbuildit.co.uk**) aims to remove the hassle from home improvements with unique insider information of the trade.

The site's 'Internet Architect' helps you avoid getting stung, by drawing up a complete range of professional documents specific to your project. Whether it's a roofing repair job, flooring, or a new bathroom, the Architect will deliver a personalised specification of the work that needs to be done along with a detailed building contract for just £10. This can then be presented to a builder to help you get a problem free, high quality end product.

The site is also home to a Cost Calculator which provides estimates for work. This helps when your builder comes out with the immortal line 'ooh, it's gonna cost you'.

trolley dash

A ROUND UP OF THE LATEST GEAR AVAILABLE ONLINE

- ☐ Fed up with searching for bargains? Look no further than Littlewoods (**www.littlewoods.com**). The 'All Must Go' section of the online store injects a bit of excitement into the world of clothes shopping, letting you bid for items in a battle of nerve and negotiation.
- ☐ **Those whose fashion tastes are a little more refined can now marvel at some of the most elegant rocks on the Web, at Cool Diamonds (www.cooldiamonds.com). Thanks to the latest virtual reality technology, you can watch the elegant diamond rings sparkle as they rotate before your eyes. However, with some prices topping £14,000, this could be the closest you'll get to one.**
- ☐ Of course, if you do buy a diamond you'll need the flash motor to go with it, and once you've done that you'll need some insurance. Luckily though, the BBC's Top Gear online shopping guide has just added a motor insurance section, letting you pluck out the cheapest quotes from a range of top insurers and then buy online. The site, at **www.beeb.com/topgear**, also includes a guide to buying insurance written by the team of know-alls at *Top Gear*.

Product: Ultinote AS8400
Price: £1499 + VAT
Contact: www.higrade.com

HI AND MIGHTY

UNTIL RECENTLY, ONLY the clinically insane would consider solely relying on a notebook PC. That is set to change with the HiGrade UltiNot. With its lightning quick 1 GHz PIII processor and internal CD-RW/DVD-ROM combination drive, the AS8400 gives the speed and multimedia capabilities previously only available in well-equipped desktops.

Product: S630 Bubble Jet
Price: £189
Contact: www.canon.co.uk

BUBBLE TROUBLE

SPEED FREAKS WILL love this nippy Bubble Jet printer, which is capable of firing off up to 17 pages a minute. Producing the sort of image definition once only read about in science fiction magazines, the colour S630 can spurt out up to 2.88 million dots of ink per square inch thanks to its true 2400 x 1200 dpi resolution.

Product: Multimedia Card
Price: TBA
Contact: www.scmmicro.com

RING TUNES

THIS NIFTY DEVICE will bring music to the ears of anyone with a Siemens SL45 or SL45I mobile phone. The matchbox-sized reader can be hooked up to a PC or Mac and used to download up to 45 minutes of MP3 files to the phone. Our top suggestions would be the Blondie classic 'Call me' or perhaps even 'Hanging on the telephone'.

BACK CHAT

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT PRACTICAL INTERNET AND THE NET IN GENERAL. EMAIL US AT **PI@PARAGON.CO.UK** AND YOU COULD WIN A WEBCAM

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT THE MAGAZINE OR THE INTERNET IN GENERAL? HERE'S YOUR CHANCE. EMAIL US AT **PI@PARAGON.CO.UK** OR POST YOUR LETTERS THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY TO *PRACTICAL INTERNET*, PARAGON PUBLISHING, PARAGON HOUSE, ST PETER'S ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET BH1 2JS

Competition winners

Congrats to the lucky winner of *Practical Internet*'s issue 56 competition to win a £2,400 Web server for a year from Netcetera (**www.inetc.net**). He is Lionel Saunders of Derby.

This month's competitions, to win an Internet PC and eCommerce software worth £3,700, are on pages 90-91. Good luck!

Letter of the month

Every month, the best letter we receive will win a splendid ZoomCam Webcam (pictured below). The camera is ideal for all sorts of multimedia applications including video capture, video mail and videoconferencing. Available in USB, PPC or ISA versions, these cameras are perfect for bridging the gap between distant family, friends and colleagues.

Letter of the month

Form dilemma

I'm setting up a Web site for my local running club in Pewsey Vale, so your feature article 'Build a knockout Web Site' in July's *Practical Internet* was just what I needed.

One thing I really want is to also offer a race registration service to runners. That means that I will either use a 'mailto:' HTML command so that whatever is typed into the form is emailed to myself, or else I'll have to use a CGI script and create a form.

I don't think the 'mailto:' option is a particularly good one since the sender may not have his or her email facilities set up.

I have no problems with going down the CGI route, but need an ISP (or other provider) who will allow this. I've hunted through the lists of free ISPs, and haven't come across any which offer this support to non-business users – ie they make a charge which covers all their other services which I'm not interested in.

Ideally, I'd like a free service, but if this isn't possible, low charges are acceptable.

Roger Strickland

James Seabright, *Practical Internet's* Web building expert, replies: "You're correct in saying that the 'mailto' method of processing forms is unreliable at the best of times. Thankfully, there are two routes open to you that needn't involve spending money. First of all, you could try a form processing service, where the CGI script is hosted on another Web site. You can still customise the way your form is handled through specifying options in your HTML code.

"Take a look at www.response-o-matic.com or www.formany.com for just two examples of such a service. The alternative route to go down is finding a free Web host that offers CGI services – these do exist, and can be tracked down using directory sites such as www.freewebspace.net and www.hostsearch.com. You will need to use the 'advanced search' option to track down the services you're after. One Web host you might want to try straight away is www.digitalrice.com – it doesn't even require an advert on your page."

Add a form to your site for free with Response-O-Matic. See our feature on pages 42-46 for more site add-ons

Give me cheap ADSL!

Thanks for the superb feature article 'ADSL For Just £20 A Month' (*Practical Internet*, August 2001) which explored the various ways to get broadband Net access as cheaply as possible.

I'm definitely intending to sign up with the wireless broadband service Tele2, which is launching in my area very shortly. It sounds ideal – fast, always-on Web access without messy cabling. Thanks for pointing it out!

Greg O'Hara

You're welcome, Greg. We're glad you found the feature helpful. Look for lots more coverage of the growing broadband revolution in *Practical Internet* during the months to come.

Practical Internet *explored the numerous ways of getting cheap broadband Internet access in issue 57*

We've been ad!

The CD with issue 54 of your excellent magazine contained WebWasher, and you devoted two pages to its installation and use. Great news for surfers – but tough luck for those nasty old advertisers!

But wait a minute. How many of your advertisers would continue to pay you money if newsagents ripped out the ad pages before placing copies on the shelves?

Advertising revenue supports the Internet. If advertisers are thwarted in this way, the end result will surely be less 'free' content, and some worthy Web sites folding altogether. The so-called 'dotcom meltdown' has already shown what can happen to sites.

Advertisers ain't going to keep spending on ads which don't reach us. Do we really want to remove the subsidy we currently enjoy? Do we want to be constantly paying for stuff by credit card just to be free of banner ads?

Mark Durband

A fair point, Mark! But judging from the amount of positive reader feedback we received about the WebWasher tutorial, most Web users would prefer to be without pesky pop-ups and in-your-face ad banners screaming from every corner of every Web page.

The pay-off is costlier Web sites in the long run – as we're already seeing with newspapers (see this month's lead news story on page 10). Only market forces will decide which way the Web goes.

Bravely going...

Thanks for a great magazine! Most computing magazines have more adverts than useful information – but *PI* is great and your tutorials are really clear – I put most of them into practice and I'm only 12!

I thought you might like to know that I have found a really good site for Webmasters. It's called Bravenet (**www.bravenet.com**) and it provides almost everything for free. Just a few of the services are Web polls, fast URL, Guestbook, Free for all links, surveys... the list is endless!

Bravenet really helps you make your site interactive! I've put a few of Bravenet's services on my site – you can see them at **http://clik.to/bencase**

Ben Case

Awww, shucks. Thanks, Ben! We've mentioned Bravenet in *Practical Internet* before, but it's certainly worthy of another mention. See our feature, Make Your Site Sticky, on pages 42-46 for more services offering add-ons for your site.

Get jabbing!

I bought a copy of your recent magazine for the cover CD, which is not something I usually do. However, a quick glance at it in my local newsagents suggested the '50 Best Free Net Programs' (issue 55) would be worth a closer look. Better than that, I found that many of them are indeed great and the explanation of each one in the magazine is simple and concise. You managed to point directly to those that may be good to have a go at.

WebWasher on our CD with issue 54 helped you kill banner ads

WEB WATCHDOG

BEEN RIPPED OFF BY AN ISP OR ONLINE SHOP AND CAN'T GET A REPLY? SEND YOUR PROBLEMS TO OUR CANINE CONSUMER CRUSADER AT **WATCHDOG@PARAGON.CO.UK**

If you don't have a credit card, try using 0800dial's Home User service which provides 24-hour unmetered access for £12.99/month and lets you pay by direct debit

No credit card means no Internet

I'm currently using BT Surftime and have encountered no problems with them, although my Internet time is restricted to after 6pm on weekdays and at weekends.

Recently, I tried to change to the BT Anytime package but was asked for my credit card details. This proved to be tricky as I do not own one (my current method of payment is added directly to my phone bill).

Since then I've searched for an ISP which offers a monthly fee and free call time but does not require a credit card for payment, but I haven't managed to find one.

I have a bank account and I could pay by direct debit. Please could you inform me of any ISP that fits my bill. I feel that in light of our present government's policy on encouraging so called 'poorer' families onto the Internet, there must be more people than just me with this problem.

Jon Parrott

Web Watchdog suggests you look at 0800Dial's excellent Home User service at www.0800dial.com which offers unmetered Internet access for £12.99/month. You can pay by direct debit. It offers access 24 hours a day across the week and also provides 15 email addresses and 10Mb of free Web space. Alternatively, have a look through our Which ISP? section on pages 136-143 or consult www.net4nowt.com.

Unfortunately, if you haven't got a credit card, BT Anytime won't work

WEB WATCHDOG

BEWARE OF THE DOG!

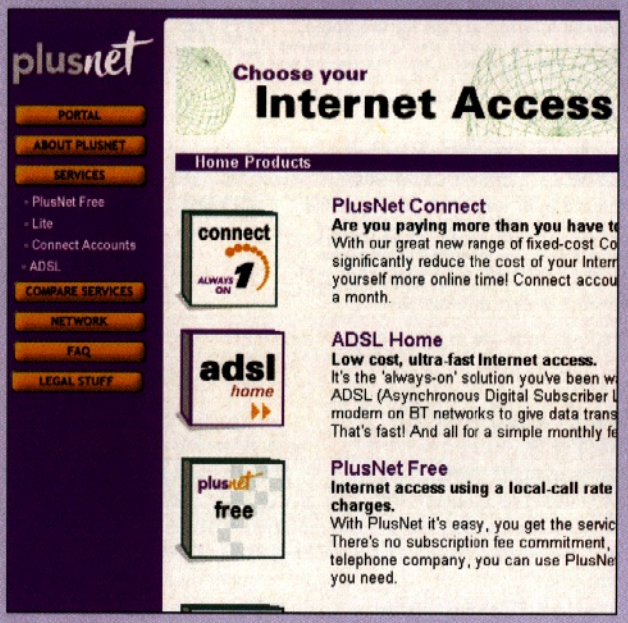
Non BT ISPs

I currently use Cable & Wireless for Internet access, which was recently merged with NTL. This, I thought, would be great as I'd finally get free 0800 Internet access for a monthly subscription. Alas, this has not been the case and they say they will not be bringing such a service into the Norwich area.

I would therefore like to know about any decent ISPs offering 0800 access that do not require a BT line.

Michael Sorensen

Web Watchdog hunted high and low for some non-BT unmetered ISPs (there aren't many!), and suggests you look at AOL (www.aol.co.uk), PlusNet (www.plus.net), Net In A Nutshell (www.nutshell.co.uk), Surfing Rabbit (www.surfingrabbit.com) and Virgin (www.virgin.net).



PlusNet (www.plus.net) provides unmetered Internet access without requiring a BT phone line

The best instant messaging tool around? Reader Kevin Salaman suggests you take a look at www.myjabber.org

However, your article on instant messaging, Instant Enlightenment, did not mention what I believe is the best messaging tool around – **www.myjabber.org**.

As a recent convert to the messaging world, being able to communicate with several messengers through one interface is much simpler than other programs. It may be worth your readers having a look at the whole Jabber thing.

Kevin Salaman

That's very good advice, Kevin. Keep your eyes peeled as we intend to take a look at this excellent chat tool in more detail in an upcoming issue of the mag.

Doing the business

I'm a regular reader of *Practical Internet* and would like to comment that I find the 'Your Business Online' section added in recent months to be a great addition to the magazine.

There must be a lot of readers like me who are computer users but are also developing businesses from home. I have found the information to be always well researched, clear and informative. I trust you will develop this side of things – it adds a great dimension to the magazine

Melanie Pursglove

Thanks for the kind comments, Melanie. Yes, we certainly intend to keep Your Business Online and hope that you continue to find it interesting. Let us know at pi@paragon.co.uk if you have any suggestions for features in the section and remember to keep us updated on the progress of your own business.

FREE NET LEGAL ADVICE

LEGAL AID

RICHARD COHEN, CO-FOUNDER OF THE DESKTOP LAWYER (WWW.DESKTOPLAWYER.NET), ANSWERS YOUR INTERNET LEGAL QUESTIONS FOR FREE

Email us at watchdog@paragon.co.uk with the subject 'Legal Aid' and we will forward your question on to Richard

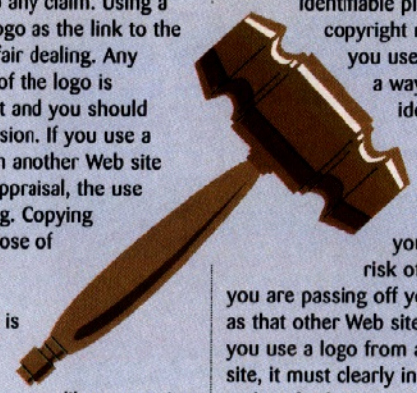
Graphic law

Is it alright if I use graphics on my Web site which I've taken from other sites? For instance, can I get the BBC logo from **www.bbc.co.uk** and then place it on my site and link back to that Web address? If it's just a logo do I really need to ask permission?

Jim Harrifield

If you use a graphic from another Web site, you risk a claim for breach of copyright and passing off. There is copyright in graphics. The owner of the copyright can exploit the copyright as they see fit and you cannot use it without permission.

However, if your use of the material is 'fair dealing', you have a defence to any claim. Using a Web site's logo as the link to the Web site is fair dealing. Any further use of the logo is probably not and you should seek permission. If you use a graphic from another Web site for critical appraisal, the use is fair dealing. Copying for the purpose of parody is permissible unless there is an ulterior motive, like promoting a similar product or Web site.



Sampling is prohibited where there has been the use of an identifiable piece of copyright material. If you use graphics in a way that could identify your Web site as being the Web site of another, you run the risk of a claim that you are passing off your Web site as that other Web site. Thus, if you use a logo from another Web site, it must clearly indicate a link and no further association unless there is permission.

Looking for advice on how to advertise your site? Get a back copy of Practical Internet *issue 56 by calling 01454 642442*

Advertising your site

I found the article on advertising your Web site (The Effective Way To Advertise Your Site, issue 56) very interesting. In my own experience I find the best form of advertising is online. Adverts in print media tend to be seen by those who are not online – therefore you are relying on that individual to remember your URL for when they get online.

Don't get me wrong, it does work, and traffic does arise out of traditional advertising – I just believe that a good ad needs to be in the right place at the right time. In the case of a Web site, the right place is online.

There seems to be a backlash against online advertising going on at the moment in much of the media. It is criticised for not working and techy people seem to resent it because it 'commercialises' the Net.

Having worked in publishing for five years before setting up my Web site, I have formed the opinion that there is little or no real distinction between a good magazine and a good Web site. Each are only as good as the information they contain and the number and type of people who read/visit them. On that basis, I know of no magazine which would actively criticise itself as an advertising medium, or indeed, would be able to survive financially without the advertising revenue.

So why are sites being criticised so heavily? Perhaps it is a backlash against hyped expectations – and in that case some sites should definitely hold themselves accountable. But a site can offer a much more accurate, targeted and accountable means of advertising than virtually any other media.

John Logan

The over-hyped expectations are undoubtedly one of the key reasons behind the advertising slump, but the ad industry itself has not helped itself by using aggravating pop-ups, pesky ad windows that can't be closed, and large banners which slow down the loading of pages. When these issues are sorted, online ads may become more effective again.

Attachment of the month

Yikes! We reckon this image of a sign spotted in Mexico by reader Graham Michaels must be the most unwelcoming one we've even seen. You can almost hear a pack of dogs growling in the background along with a snarling Mexican adding bullets to his gun. Okay, we have vivid imaginations.

Thanks for contacting us, Graham. Keep emailing us your funniest email attachments, folks...

Received a quirky or funny email attachment? Send it to pi@paragon.co.uk with the subject 'Attachment of the month' and we'll try and feature it here

Call us free on

0800 074 7581

or visit our web site at

www.ghoulnet.com

BusinessWeb Hosting from

£35 inc.vat per year

Domain Names Registration

.co.uk £9.95 2 years inc.vat

.com £10.95 per year inc.vat

Server Co-location from

£50 per month exc. vat

Full E-commerce Solution from

£25 per month exc. vat

Credit Card Processing Facilities

Web Design Services from

£100 exc. vat

www.Ghoulnet.com

INTERNET SERVICES

Sales: 0800 074 7581 Technical: 0845 3452412
Fax: 0845 3452413 Email: sales@ghoulnet.com

101 MOST USEFUL WEB SITES

WORLD-BEATING SITES THAT SAVE YOU TIME AND MONEY

MAKE THE NET WORK FOR YOU! JO CHIPCHASE HUNTS DOWN THE WEB'S MOST USEFUL SITES

It has been said that you can find out anything about anything on the Internet. From news to weather to entertainment to technology, the Net could be the greatest reference tool you ever come across. Providing you can find what you're looking for. The downside of having so much variety is that there's an awful lot of guff out there, meaning that a simple fact-finding mission can quickly spiral into an infuriating pit of despair.

In an effort to help you sort out the wheat from the chaff, we've put together a compilation of 101 sites whose sole purpose is to make your life easier. Whether it's speeding up your PC or helping you locate a bargain holiday, you'll find that the Internet can help.

SMARTER WEB SEARCHING

TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE INTERNET, YOU NEED TO FIND SITES AND THIS IS WHERE SEARCH TOOLS COME IN. BY ENTERING A FEW WELL-PLACED KEYWORDS, YOU CAN SOON IMMERSE YOURSELF IN WHATEVER INFORMATION YOU WANT

1 Google

www.google.com
Google is the UK's eleventh favourite search engine, according to research agencies, Media Matrix and Nielson Net Ratings. It's fuss-free, and it comes up trumps on most keyword searches. It also provides search results for Yahoo!.

2 Google Groups Search

http://groups.google.com
Conduct a search of thousands of newsgroups in just second using this brand spanking new service. You can restrict your search to popular discussion categories of your choice - such as .alt, biz, comp, rec and misc.

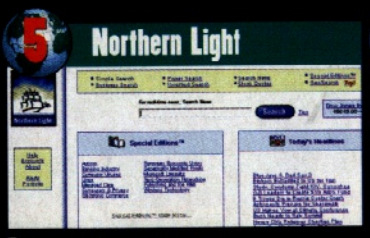
3 Google Picture Searcher

http://images.google.com
Don't waste time trawling the Web to find pictures. Simply enter a keyword into Google's new picture searcher, and it will locate a suitable GIF or JPEG image in seconds. It also shows you the original page on which the image appears.

4 All The Web

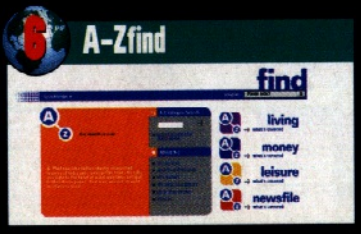
www.alltheweb.com
Another simple but effective engine, All The Web is handy if you're searching for an exact phrase. You can search specifically for WAP pages or multimedia content, besides performing a general trawl of the Web.

5 Northern Light



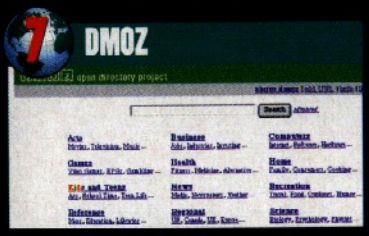
www.northernlight.com
Northern Light is helpful if you're seeking business related information. It has a 'special collection' of news stories that are culled from 7,100 publications worldwide. Although you have to pay a couple of quid to view these special reports, its beats messing around in the library with microfiche.

6 A-Zfind



www.a-zfind.com
Directory/reference site A-Zfind lists UK Web pages that have been reviewed by intelligent people. It takes users straight to the content pages on reviewed sites, rather than the home pages, which makes for accurate browsing. Sub sites comprise A-Zleisure, A-Zliving, A-Zmoney and A-Znewsfile.

7 DMOZ



http://dmoz.org
The un-snazzily named Open Directory Project, aka DMOZ, is the "largest human edited directory of the Web" and is compiled by a team of volunteers. Several other search engines use DMOZ data (including, by its own admission, adult sites).

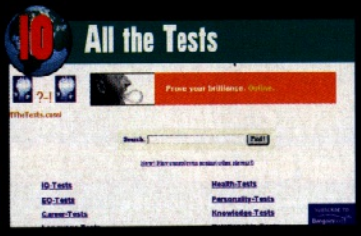
8 Dogpile

www.dogpile.com
Dogpile is a meta searcher, meaning it trawls the databases of other search engines, including GoTo, AltaVista, LookSmart, Lycos and Yahoo!. A handy time saver if you want to investigate coverage of a particular topic.

9 Yahoo! UK

http://uk.yahoo.com
Yahoo! has to be listed by grace of its popularity (it's the UK's number one search engine, according to Nielsen and Media Matrix). Besides being an engine/directory, Yahoo! offers a plethora of portal content.

10 All the Tests



www.allthetests.com
Allthetests.com is a search engine for finding personality and other tests on the Web - from memory tests and IQ profiles to 'how sleazy are you (a particular favourite of ours). One for people who enjoy multiple-choice questionnaires.

GET MORE FROM YOUR PC

MAYBE YOU HAVE A WEB SITE THAT NEEDS A TWEAK TO MAKE IT SHINE. OR PERHAPS YOU WANT TO TRY A NEW PROGRAM TO HELP YOUR PC RUN THAT LITTLE BIT FASTER. THERE'S LOTS OF FODDER OUT THERE...

11 LinkPopularity.com

www.linkpopularity.com
Reciprocal linking is an important promotional tool for any site. LinkPopularity.com tells you the number of sites that link to your site. If the number is low, you could run a report on rival sites, and contact some of the referring sites to request links.

12 Domain Twist

https://secure.onlineaccess.net/cart/megasearch.php?IYD=1
If you need help in finding a snazzy domain name in the top level registers, Domain Twist is here to help. It will search for permutations of your chosen word and, if you wish, take you to the checkout.

GET MORE FROM YOUR PC

continued »

13 Bring Me Hits

www.bringmehits.com/submit.html
You can get your Web site listed on gadzillions of search engines and sites from this page. Bring Me Hits links to worldwide site submission services... so your site is sure to get the worldwide exposure it deserves.

14 Geektools WHOIS

www.geektools.com/whois.html
Geektool's powerful WHOIS proxy will allow you to perform a searching using a variety of identifiers, including domain name, IP address, AS Number and NIC handle. Great if you want to find out who owns or administers a particular server or domain.

15 CNET.com – Web Building

http://builder.cnet.com
An excellent starting point for anyone desperate to be a Web developer, including a searchable 'how to' library, downloads, newsletters and more. It covers most platforms and technologies, and should sort you out a treat.

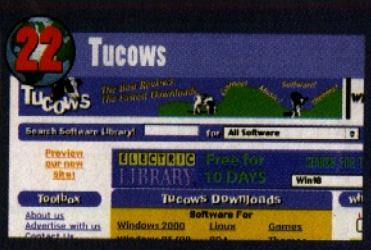
20 SafeWeb

https://www.safeWeb.com
By using this site, you can cover your tracks while browsing. SafeWeb will mask your IP address, block cookies and disable pop-up windows. So, you can view 'naughty' material without being accurately logged.

21 Download.com

www.download.com
Seeking a desktop enhancement, need to find a missing device driver, or want a new app for your Palmtop? Whether you're using a PC or Mac, you'll find a range of software on this comprehensive resource site.

22 Tucows

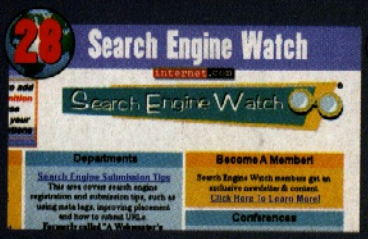


www.tucows.com
Another extensive download site, covering numerous platforms and types of software. Downloads are given a 1-5 cow rating. You'll also find news, reviews and an online store all presented in a bouncy bovine style.

23 ZDNet UK

www.zdnet.co.uk
*Tech news, views, hardware reviews and free software downloads, amongst other things. Although the UK site is far less comprehensive than the US pages (**www.zdnet.com**), it's nevertheless handy when making kit-buying decisions.*

28 Search Engine Watch



www.searchenginewatch.com
Another site from Internet.com, Searchenginewatch is a must-visit if you're involved in search engine placement. Points of interest include submission tips and research-based user statistics for the most popular engines.

29 Help Drivers

www.helpdrivers.com
For those times when you need serious help getting the hardware on your PC up and running again. Includes a top section on overclocking, and more information on drivers than you'd ever even care to know.

30 PC Pitstop

www.pcpitstop.com
PC Pitstop (unfortunately no relation to Penelope) is a complete online diagnostic and tune-up service to kick even the most tired of PCs back into shape. And it's completely free as well, which is always a bonus.

MY MOST USEFUL SITES

HARRIET SCOTT, PRESENTER OF VIRGIN RADIO'S 1-4PM WEEKDAY LUNCHTIME SHOW

Tesco Direct

www.tesco.com

This is a real favourite. I'd rather spend my time relaxing and cooking food than shopping for it, especially when it comes on next day delivery. There are some great offers, and you can actually buy loads of things in about 20 minutes.

Victoria's Secret

www.victoriasecrets.com

There's nothing worse than wandering around the department stores, bumping into guys loitering around the lingerie counter! Let's face it, we all like lovely underwear, so it's nice to take your time at home choosing something sexy and have it delivered to your door.

Tombola.com

www.tombola.com

I enjoy escaping from work for five minutes each day to get my daily fix of Tombola. They have fun scratch card style games with animation and sound, and change games pretty frequently so you don't tire of them. I could win a £10k jackpot !

National Geographic

www.nationalgeographic.com

I can easily get lost in this site. It has amazing photographs and features from the magazine, besides travel tips, maps, special reports and interviews with explorers and travellers. Perfect for giving myself a break without actually having to physically go anywhere.

NME

www.NME.com

Where else would a music DJ go but to NME.com? There's dozens of great music Web sites out there, but this one takes some beating. It provides for a huge range of music tastes. One of my top Bookmarks.

Virgin Radio

www.virginradio.co.uk

Okay as you might expect, I'm going to give Virgin Radio a plug. We were one of the very first stations in Europe to go online. It's not just my opinion – we've won loads of awards for this site and you can log in and listen from anywhere in the world. It also allows my mother to keep up with my life.

16 AnyBrowser.com

www.anybrowser.com
Check your Web site to see if it's compatible on any browser and screen resolution. You can also create meta tags, validate HTML, verify that links are active and see how search engines will describe your site.

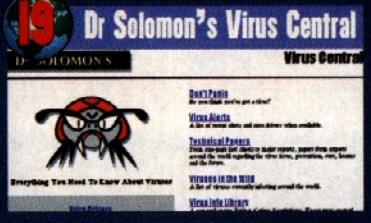
17 Chinwag

www.chinwag.com
Chinwag is a collection of UK-based email discussion lists. Topics include Flash, Shockwave, usability issues and new media. Besides joining the lists, you can peruse archived postings and a calendar of new media events.

18 Another.com

www.another.com
Register Webmail accounts under .co.uk aliases of your choice (remember that Another.com, in its previous Funmail guise, snapped up most of the decent generic .uk domains). Ideal if you want to mask your identity for underhand purposes.

19 Dr Solomon's Virus Central



http://195.112.25.68/vircen
Inform yourself about new and deadly viruses that are in the wild, and learn about relatively harmless ones too. Besides saving your hard drive, a regular visit to Dr Solomon's could prevent you from being the goon who forwards hoax virus warnings.

24 Matt's Script Archive

www.worldwidemart.com/scripts
Matt's free Perl scripts have been the mainstay of various Net back-ends since the early Nineties. They run everything from simple guest books to visitor counters. Somewhere down the line, let's hope Matt has made money out of his efforts.

25 HostedScripts.com

www.hostedscripts.com
Can't face grappling with Perl/CGI? In that case, sign up for one of the 23 free, remotely hosted resources at HostedScripts. All you have to do is customise your message board, guestbook, etc, and tolerate the host's banner ads.

26 The JavaScripts Source

http://javascript.internet.com
Lots of nifty free JavaScripts to add some pizzazz to your site, including form validators, navigation devices and games. You'll find something to fit the bill, whether you want the final result to be tasteful or tacky.

27 Webreference.com

www.webreference.com
An Internet.com network site, Webreference offers a myriad of resources for the Web developer – including viewpoints, guides, and code libraries for JavaScript, HTML, DHTML, XML and Perl. You're bound to find something of use.

HAVE NET, WILL TRAVEL

WHETHER IT'S FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND EUROPE, OR READING UP ON A CITY, THE NET HAS LOADS OF SITES TO HELP WITH YOUR TRAVELS

31 ShellGeoStar

www.shellgeostar.co.uk
You can plan any European road journey with GeoStar. It will tell you the shortest and fastest routes and provide a full set of directions, so you don't go astray at junctions. You can also view zoomable maps based on postcodes or street names.

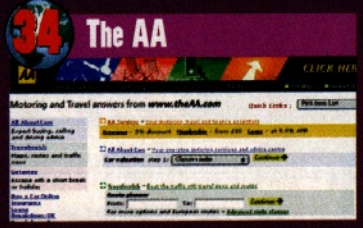
32 Multimap.com

www.multimap.co.uk
Multimap.com provides zoomable UK street maps and travel directions, and even manages to throw in some local information. It also has aerial photos for 35 locations, although some of these are a bit out of date.

33 Association of British Drivers

www.abd.org.uk
ABD has a handy map of speed traps around the UK, arranged and listed by county. If you have boy/girl racer tendencies, take a gander at this site before setting off (after all, you don't want points on your license).

34 The AA

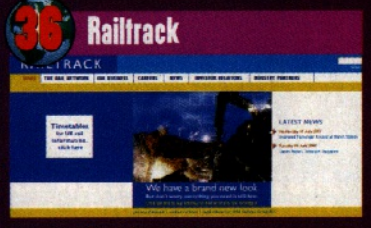


www.theaa.com
Get your car valued accurately online, find a decent hotel in a city of your choice, plan your route, or inform yourself of current UK motoring conditions. WAP users can have travel updates sent to their phones. Wow.

35 RAC

www.rac.co.uk
The UK's other major motoring organisation offers route planning, traffic news, a database of decent hotels and information about international driving permits. You can also sign up for a free trial of the Routeminder travel information system.

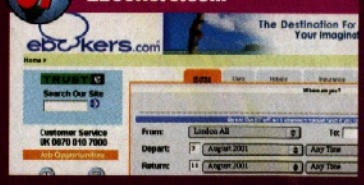
36 Railtrack



www.railtrack.co.uk
Don't despair at the state of the trains as the Railtrack site will, at least, help you out with accurate timetable information. You can also search an archive of Railtrack press releases, although nothing came up under 'leaf on the track'.

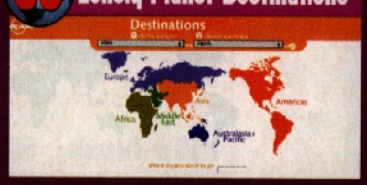
HAVE NET, WILL TRAVEL continued »

37 Ebookers.com



www.ebookers.com
If you need to find a reasonably priced flight, holiday, car, hotel or cruise, ebookers.com will search its extensive database and present the options – cheapest first.

38 Lonely Planet Destinations



www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations
A practical world guide for travellers, featuring extensive maps and national/regional information for each country. It's invaluable if you're planning a holiday and want to end up off the beaten track.

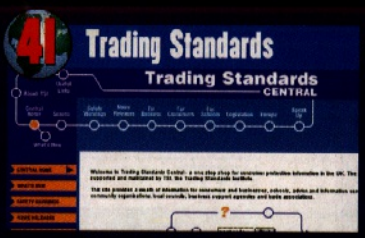
39 Cities.com

www.lemonde.com
A searchable database of 3,576 city guides, encompassing 145 different countries worldwide. Great for doing your research if you're planning a city break.

WHEN THINGS GET TRICKY...

THE NET IS MORE THAN CAPABLE OF DEALING WITH LIFE'S LITTLE HICCUPS. FROM LEGAL ADVICE TO MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS, THE INTERNET OFFERS THE HELP YOU NEED

41 Trading Standards



www.tradingstandards.gov.uk
Don't get ripped off. Avail yourself of the information provided by Trading Standards (you'll find specially tailored sections for consumers, businesses and schools). If you don't know your rights, you will after a visit to this site.

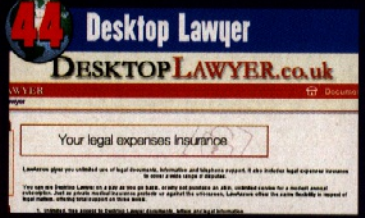
42 Police Services

www.police.uk
We're not sure whether the boys in blue really need an all-singing, all-dancing Flash front-end that ties in with a melee of sub-sites. That aside, you can find your local constabulary's details using a clickable map and report minor crimes online.

43 Freelawyer

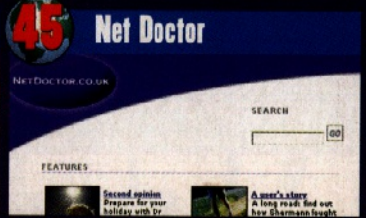
www.freelawyer.co.uk
A team of virtual lawyers provide free advice on consumer, motoring, family, housing, employment and personal injury law. After they've given you a legal information sheet, you can receive a free estimate for taking the matter further.

44 Desktop Lawyer



www.desktoplawyer.net
A source of DIY legal documents and letters, with prices starting from just £2.99. You'll also find free personal law advice covering areas such as debt, tax, consumer issues, employment and rights of the individual.

45 Net Doctor

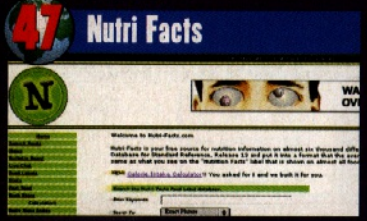


www.netdoctor.co.uk
Whether you're in tip-top condition or on your last legs, you'll find something of interest on Net Doctor. Look up a disease or condition, test yourself for depression and read the latest information on sexual health.

46 Well Aware

www.well-aware.com
At this site, you'll find directories for medical conditions and natural treatments, from acupuncture to the use of willow bark instead of aspirin. There's also a lung clinic and someone's pregnancy diaries.

47 Nutri Facts

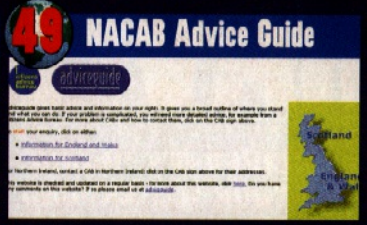


www.nutri-facts.com
A US site that tells you the constituents of more than 6,000 foodstuffs and suggests recommended daily allowances (RDAs). If you want to inform yourself about the nutritional value of a hamburger with cheese, this is the place to go.

48 Dentists UK

www.dentalnetuk.com
If your choppers are in bad order, you should certainly visit Dentists UK. It will help you find a local dentist, explain dental treatments and – if you're a sucker for punishment – show you career opportunities in dentistry.

49 NACAB Advice Guide



www.adviceguide.org.uk
This excellent site is set up by the Citizen's Advice Bureau and has lots of basic advice and information about your rights. It covers all of the UK and is invaluable if you are not quite sure where you legally stand.

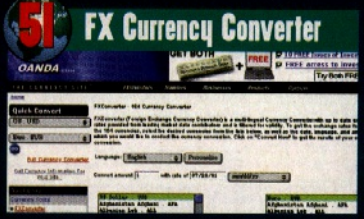
50 InsuranceOnline.co.uk

www.insuranceonline.co.uk
For peace of mind, it's best to get your valuables insured. But it can be tricky finding the best company for you. However, InsuranceOnline.co.uk will bring you a variety of quotes from different companies so you can then pick and choose.

TIMESAVERS

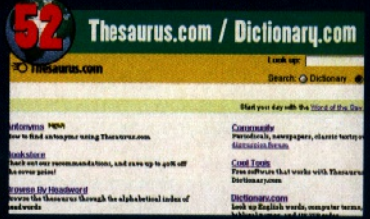
INSTEAD OF HAVING TO WRESTLE WITH REFERENCE BOOKS OR PHONING ORGANISATIONS UP, THE NET IS AN INVALUABLE PLACE TO FIND THOSE HANDY PIECES OF USEFUL INFORMATION

51 FX Currency Converter



www.oanda.com/convert/classic
Convert amounts between 164 worldwide currencies (more unusual ones include the Albanian Lek and the Zambian Kwacha). Rest assured that the site uses "up to date exchange rates provided from leading market data contributors".

52 Thesaurus.com / Dictionary.com



www.thesaurus.com and www.dictionary.com
This particular online version of Roget's Thesaurus is closely linked with Dictionary.com, which allows you to easily look up the meaning of a word or find alternatives.

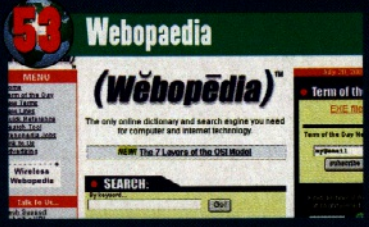
KEEP YOUR FINGER ON THE PULSE

STAY INFORMED ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE UK AND AROUND THE WORLD WITH THESE CONSTANTLY UPDATED NEWS SITES...

40 Executive Travel

www.executivetravel.com
An essential guide to international etiquette, aimed at those travelling abroad on business. You'll find a wealth of information on how to interact with your foreign colleagues politely and decorously.

53 Webopaedia



www.pcwebopaedia.com
Another member of the Internet.com network, the Webopedia is a comprehensive dictionary and search engine covering Net terminology. If you can't tell your cookie from your cache, this is the place to go.

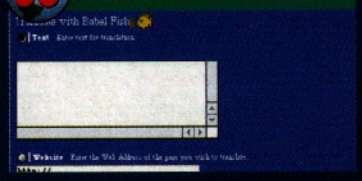
54 Encyclopaedia Britannica

www.britannica.com
Don't be an ignoramus: search the famous encyclopaedia to gain knowledge on just about any subject of your choice. The Britannica site is US-based, and has a strong Stateside slant, but that's no reason to ignore it.

55 Candor's reminder

www.candor.com/reminder
Isn't it awful when you forget friends' birthdays, or set your partner sulking by missing your anniversary? Candor's service can save the day. If you register and enter important dates, it will send you advance reminders.

56 Babelfish



http://babelfish.altavista.com
AltaVista's Babelfish translates text from English to major foreign languages and vice versa. It's not particularly accurate on long pieces of text (Pidgin English springs to mind) but, hey, it's ideal for deciphering a few simple words and phrases.

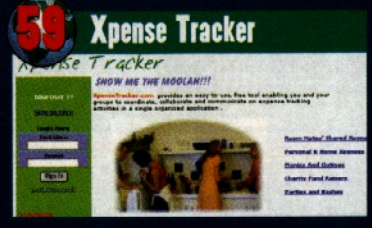
57 Royal Mail

www.royalmail.com
Try out the Royal Mail's handy postal rate calculator, save time with the UK postcode finder and use the Track & Trace facility to monitor the progress of special delivery and recorded items (shame it can't stop your postie from losing them).

58 UK Phonebook

www.ukphonebook.com
If you can't be bothered to open the heavy telephone directory and scan the pages, the UK Phonebook is here to help. It uses data from BT, so you find business and residential numbers easily, at a few clicks of the mouse.

59 Xpense Tracker



www.xpensetracker.com
Xpense Tracker is a free tool that helps you keep track of your cash flow. It can be used by individuals or collaboratively by groups. So, if your flat mates argue about the household bills, this could be a good way to calculate shared expenses.

60 Ihavemoved.com

www.ihavemoved.com
This is the UK's first free change of address service. It tells utility companies that you've moved, helps you arrange new utility suppliers, and will even notify the DVLA and Passport Office of your new shiny abode.

61 Guardian Unlimited

www.guardian.co.uk
One of the best news sites around, Guardian Unlimited is your portal to all that's happening in the world. You can have headlines sent directly to your email, WAP or PDA, or just browse through the news pages online.

62 Newsnow

www.newsnow.co.uk
Using raw news feeds, NewsNow brings you breaking news from around the world, with five minute updates. The news categories include business and finance, IT, current affairs, entertainment and sport.

63 Wired News

www.wired.com
Daily IT-related news from around the world, with sections for business, culture, politics and technology. You can view the week's most interesting pictures, listen to 'Wired News Radio', and sign up for email news alerts.

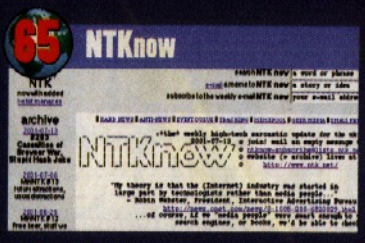
64 Slashdot

www.slashdot.org
Slashdot sells itself as "news for nerds". It's really a cross between a news site and a community, as the content is based on postings from users. Discussion topics include apache, books, developers, radio and science.

KEEP YOUR FINGER ON THE PULSE

continued »

65 NTKnow



www.ntk.net

NTKnow is a tech sector weekly newsletter compiled by industry insiders. If you sign up for it, the newsletter will arrive in your mailbox on Friday afternoons, otherwise you can view the whole thing online.

66 The Register

www.register.co.uk

The Register (or The Reg as it's fondly called by its cheeky chappie personnel) is another site offering tech sector news with a sarcastic edge. This is the place to find the lowdown on everything from Bill Gates to semiconductors.

67 About.com's Urban Legends

http://urbanlegends.about.com

Does KFC really serve up mutant organisms instead of chickens? Did a dead US office worker really sit at his desk for five days before his colleagues noticed? The answers to these burning questions, and more, can be found here.

68 BBC Weather

www.bbc.co.uk/weather

The BBC isn't always accurate with its weather predictions, but the site is still worth bookmarking. You can view current observations and five-day forecasts by city, peruse pollen counts, and see statistics for the year so far.

69 Weather.co.uk

www.weather.co.uk

Get weather forecasts tailored to your hobby or interest, whether you want to lie on the beach or engage in mountaineering. The forecasts include likely levels of precipitation or UV rays, so you know whether to pack your brolly or sun cream.

70 Met Office

www.metoffice.gov.uk

This is the absolute mother of all UK weather sites and tells you all about national and global weather. The kind people at the Met Office will also kindly inform you if there's likely to be a nasty flood in your area.

WHEN THE WORKING DAY IS DONE...

FORGET ABOUT MUNDANE, EVERYDAY STUFF AND IMMERSE YOURSELF IN WHATEVER PLEASURES YOU. NOPE, IT'S NOT PORN. IT'S SOME OF THE BEST ENTERTAINMENT SITES

71 Sportal.co.uk

www.sportal.co.uk

A leading UK sports portal, covering popular pursuits such as football, tennis, Formula 1, rugger and horse racing. Besides reading the latest sports news, you can also chat to other Sportal users in online forums.

72 Sports.com

www.sports.com

There's more sporting fun to be had at this site. Users can take place in polls, view an archive of sporting pictures and place bets on big matches. The content is deliverable to both WAP and handheld devices.

73 Football 365

www.football365.com

One for those who get excited about grown men kicking a bag of air round a field. The site is filled with news, gossip, live commentary, footie statistics, video clips and downloadable ringtones for your mobile. Lovely.

74 Sporting Life

www.sportinglife.com

Leeds based Sportinglife.com was conceived as a sister product to the racing newspaper of the same name. It claims to be the UK's most popular multi-sports Web site and has lots of news and results for different activities.

75 Freeserve's Sport

www.freeserve.com/sport

Major portal Freeserve has developed comprehensive sporting content. One of the most useful sections on the site covers 'action' sports – including BMX, snowboarding, skating and skydiving.

76 Whatsonstage.com

www.whatsonstage.com

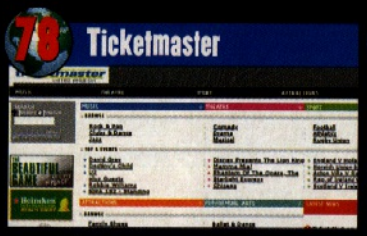
One for the lovvies, Whatsonstage is a national performing arts information service and ticket booking resource. It features theatrical news and gossip, West End and regional reviews and a discussion forum, darling.

77 Aloud.com

www.aloud.com

Find out about UK commercial music gigs and festivals, searchable by town (fixtures range from the totally tame to the rampantly raucous). If something takes your fancy, you can also buy a ticket online.

78 Ticketmaster



www.ticketmaster.co.uk

Ticketmaster is the market leader in online ticket purchasing in the UK and sells more than 80,000 tickets per month. Around 36,000 events are in its database so you should be able to find something that tickles your fancy.

79 SceneOne

www.sceneone.co.uk/s1/home

Music, movie, theatre, comedy and book reviews, plus TV listings for terrestrial and digital channels. A funky sub-site gives the lowdown on upcoming festivals and it has online ticket purchasing, too.

80 Time Out

www.timeout.com

A worldwide guide to bars, clubs, hotels, restaurants, shops, galleries, museums and music venues. Again with ticket sales. Ideal if you haven't got a clue where to go for a night out.

.info/.biz can you afford to miss the boat?

Pre-register these crucial domain names before someone else does

1&1, Europe's leading domain registration company has the power to bring you the best deals on domain registrations in the UK:

- ✔ Cheapest .co.uk/.org.uk
- ✔ Cheapest .info registrations
- ✔ Cheapest .biz registrations
- ✔ All domain/web forwarding services are free!
- ✔ Free e-mail support

Trust 1&1

- ✔ No risk
- ✔ No ties
- ✔ No transfer penalties
- ✔ 1&1 is Europe's largest domain registration company
- ✔ Comprehensive technology and helpdesk support
- ✔ 9 years of experience

YOUR-BUSINESS.biz

.biz £0.00 per month

(You just pay the standard annual database fee of £10+ VAT)

See for Yourself

Domain Type	Monthly 1&1 Cost	Yearly All Inclusive Cost
.co.uk/.org.uk	£0.00	£2.50 + VAT
.info	£0.00	£10.00 + VAT
.biz	£0.00	£10.00 + VAT
.com/.net/.org	£0.00	£10.00 + VAT

YOUR-NAME.info

.info £0.00 per month

(You just pay the standard annual database fee of £10+ VAT)

Your own exclusive business address

.biz has been designed to promote business on the worldwide internet and create a secure and advanced domain service exclusively for companies. The new .biz will give that credible address which is instantly associated with business. This new service will enable you to obtain a name that will help drive site traffic up and create the right impression of your company.

Don't miss the boat...

Finding that global address you need is becoming rare, especially if you want an address which is easily found. That's why ICANN has recently approved .info, helping you maximise your business globally without the normal restrictions. The new .info address is soon to become more universal than the highly subscribed .com. Only Afilias can register .info, and 1&1 is the biggest European member. Generate the web exposure you want, both personally and for business with .info today. What's more you will only be charged for the service when your name is confirmed and not just on registration. But hurry, it is estimated that 3 million .info addresses will be registered in the first few minutes. For the best chance of success, pre-register today!

FOR THE BEST CHANCE OF SUCCESS

VISIT US TODAY

www.oneandone.co.uk

FIRST CHOICE FOR

DOMAINS... AND COUNTING

OneAndOne.co.uk

1&1

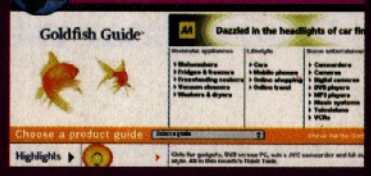
A NOSE FOR THE BARGAINS

FORGET ABOUT THE DOUBTING THOMAS' WHO DISMISS ONLINE SHOPPING. WITH ALL THE BARGAINS AVAILABLE, IT'S A SHOPAHOLIC'S PARADISE

81 Shopsmart

www.shopsmart.com
Type in a product and Shopsmart will search its database for UK online retailers who sell it. Retailers' sites are reviewed for ease of use, product range, customer service and the tastefulness of their page design.

82 Goldfish Guides



www.goldfishguide.com
Comparative information about products, based on "information sourced by a team of independent journalists". Thousands of consumer durables (cars, cameras, printers, etc.) can be compared and contrasted on price and features.

83 Top Ten Buys

www.toptenbuys.co.uk
More 'impartial' independent advice that will prevent you from making a cock-up of any future purchasing decisions. Categories for you to browse through include travel, PCs, homeware, telecoms and food.

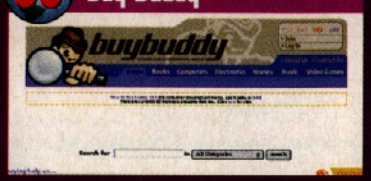
84 Which? Online

www.which.net
Despite it's June 2001 blunder, in which credit card numbers belonging to purchasers of its TaxCalc 2001 product were viewed insecurely by third parties, Which? has established itself as a reliable source of consumer information.

85 Dooyoo

www.dooyoo.co.uk
Dooyoo provides reviews of a vast range of products and services, written by UK consumers. Everything from music to motors is covered and the electrical section is handy. You'll even find guidance about vinegar and smelly cheeses.

86 Buy Buddy

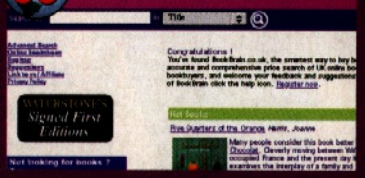


www.buybuddy.co.uk
Another UK-focused site that helps consumers make informed decisions about what books, computers, electronics, music, movies and video games to buy. You can compare products head-to-head and read reviews submitted by the members.

87 Ciao

www.uk.ciao.com
The UK version of the consumer interest site, Ciao features the opinions of more than 30,000 consumers. Participants earn 10p for every opinion they submit, and 2p for every visitor who views it. Er, this isn't really a get rich quick scheme, is it?

88 BookBrain.co.uk



www.bookbrain.co.uk
Looking for a book online? Make sure you check out BookBrain.co.uk. Enter the title of the book you want to buy, and BookBrain will come back with a list of how much different online retailers are selling it for.

89 CDWow

www.cd-wow.com
An excellent site that has a bit of musical action for everyone, all at bargain basement prices. You won't find obscure bands here, but there's still a lot to choose from. What's more, you'd be hard pushed to find a CD costing over £8.99.

90 ebay

www.ebay.co.uk
In our opinion, the best auction site around. Ebay has a whole host of items up for sale, and you can always find a bargain. Simply search by keyword or category, and then get ready to flex those auctioning fingers.

MY MOST USEFUL SITES

RHODRI WILLIAMS, SKY SPORTS NEWS PRESENTER

Sky Sports
www.skysports.com
I like to think I'd support our own Web site. When I'm travelling, I always make a point of finding a computer, so I can log on and keep abreast with what's happening in the world of sport.

Scrum.com
www.scrum.com
The best rugby site available. If you're mad about your rugby, you have to make regular visits. I'm on the mailing list and get rugby headlines emailed to me every day.

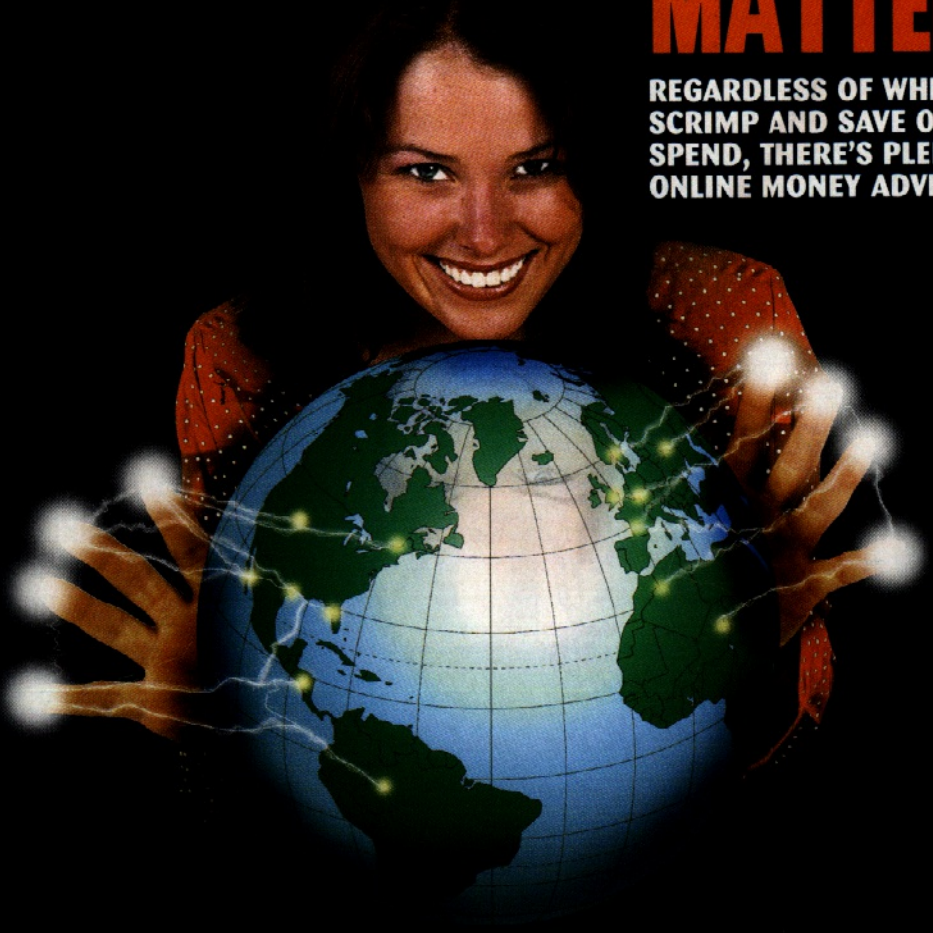
National Geographic
www.nationalgeographic.com
As a pupil at school, geography was my favourite subject. I became a subscriber of the *National Geographic* magazine. My interest in the subject has continued, and the online access has improved the availability to interesting information about the world we live in.

Vail.net
www.vail.net
After finishing college, I spent a year living in Vail, Colorado. I decided to ski for a whole season, and had the time of my life. I love to keep up with what's going on in the Vail Valley. During winter, I access the live Webcams to enjoy the beauty of the snow-covered mountains.

iCwales
www.icwales.ic24.com
Being a Welshman in London, I feel the need to keep on top of all that's going on in the Principality. I own a business in Cardiff, and still do a lot of television work back in Wales, so this site allows me access to *The Western Mail*, Wales' national newspaper. I visit it at least three times a week.

MONEY MATTERS

REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU SCRIMP AND SAVE OR GET AND SPEND, THERE'S PLENTY OF ONLINE MONEY ADVICE FOR YOU



91 Motley Fool

www.fool.com
The Fool is one of the most respected UK finance portals. Besides quality financial news and views, it includes sections on investment strategies, retirement and personal finance. The discussion forums are popular, too.

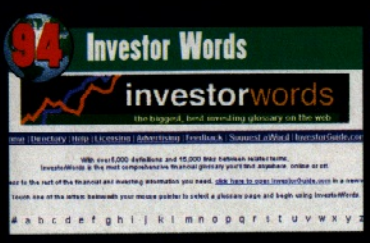
92 Financial Times

www.ft.com
FT focuses on news, markets, industries and companies, accompanied by a plethora of useful features – including reports, surveys, share prices and email news alerts. Registered users can take advantage of a 'Personal Office' online organiser.

93 Bloomberg UK

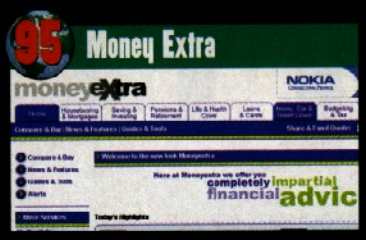
www.bloomberg.com/uk
Comprehensive information on money matters. If you're a city slicker, don't miss the real-time snapshot of world markets. You can also set up a Bloomberg 'Quick Quote' button on your browser, to get instant quotes wherever you're browsing.

94 Investor Words



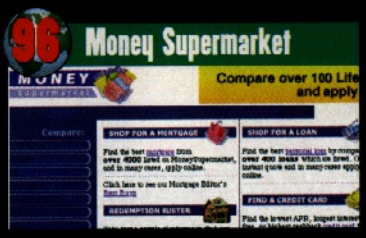
www.investorwords.com
If you find the conversation of your bank manager / accountant / financial adviser confusing and one-sided, Investor Words is here to enlighten you. It's a large finance glossary that contains more than 5,000 definitions.

95 Money Extra



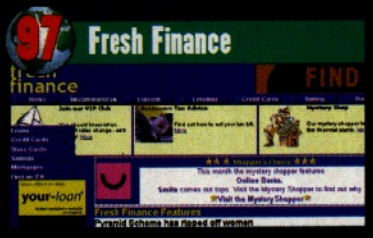
www.moneyextra.com
This site is great if you want to view comparative information for credit cards, loans, mortgages, bank accounts, insurance, utility services and stocks and shares. You can also take advantage of online guides and calculators.

96 Money Supermarket



www.moneysupermarket.com
Yet more comparative information on financial products and utilities, this time including offshore savings accounts, share dealing and property lawyers. Apparently, more than 4,000 mortgages, 400 loans and 300 credit cards are listed.

97 Fresh Finance



www.freshfinance.co.uk
Fresh Finance is aimed at the layman, rather than accomplished City slickers. It covers news, personal finance, consumer issues and how to set up a small business. You'll find comparative information and helpful features, too.

98 Hoovers

www.hoovers.co.uk
Recently launched in Europe after operating for 10 years Stateside, Hoovers provides a wealth of information about major companies. One to visit if you're about to make an investment or employment decision.

99 Clearlybusiness

www.clearlybusiness.com
A service from Freeserve and Barclays, Clearlybusiness explains how to run a small business – including advice on accounting, tax, insurance and credit control. All very practical... you're sure to pick up some handy hints.

100 Smallbusinessadvice

www.smallbusinessadvice.org.uk
Advice is the one thing that small businesses can't afford to do without. Luckily, there's plenty of information and tips for anyone involved in a small business, all presented in an accessible and friendly way.

101 Companies House

www.companieshouse.co.uk
A must visit for small limited companies, Companies House now lets you download forms and file documents online. If you're on a fact-finding mission, you can search a register of companies and look up disqualified directors.

HOW TO

Protect your privacy on the Net

JUST BECAUSE NOBODY IS SAT BESIDE YOU WHEN YOU WORK AT YOUR COMPUTER DOESN'T MEAN YOUR DETAILS CAN'T BE SEEN. **MATT HAIG** EXPLAINS HOW YOU CAN ENSURE YOUR NET CONNECTION IS MORE SECURE

YOU'VE GOT... PRIVACY PROBLEMS

ALTHOUGH THE WEB presents serious privacy problems, email is even more vulnerable. The main problem is that email travels via a number of different connections before it reaches the intended recipient's Inbox. Inevitably this means that interception is a possibility for any email message.

The most common way to secure email messages is by encryption. This involves using a system which can automatically scramble messages and then allows the recipient to 'unsubscribe' them once they arrive. A 'key' system is normally used to enable this to happen.

One of the most widely used programs, Pretty Good Privacy (www.pgp.com) produces a 'key' by getting users to choose a complex phrase as a password. Whenever anyone sends an email to the user they will use the key to scramble the message. The user will then unscramble the message at the other end by typing in their password.

Hide all of your email details by using an encryption service like the one offered by Pretty Good Privacy

However, even without using one of the key systems you are still able to encrypt messages so that they are difficult, if not impossible, for people to intercept and read. The most straightforward way is to write confidential messages using a word processing program, save the file with a password, zip (or compress) it using a product such as PKZip (www.pkware.com), and then send it as an attached email file.

PKZip lets you send an email as an attachment after you save you message in a word processing program

Another, more obvious way, to keep your email privacy protected is to set up different accounts for different purposes. For instance, you could set up a free Webmail account that you only use for subscribing to Internet services such as discussion lists. This will help keep your 'real' email address protected from spammers and other privacy attackers.

As survey after survey has revealed, one of the major deterrents stopping people shop, browse, and communicate online is the threat to individual privacy that's apparently posed by the Internet. While many dot coms and Internet bodies have traditionally written off these fears as 'paranoia', there is increasing evidence to suggest that the problem has in fact been underestimated. Web site operators are now able to track the every move of Internet users and at the last count, more than 53,000 virus threats were reported. Also, a recent study by the Consumers Internet organisation showed that many European Internet sites aimed at consumers fell short of international standards on data protection.

This all means that it is more important than ever for Web users to protect themselves from online fraud, hacking, data theft and malicious virus attacks. However, it appears that most Internet users are oblivious to such threats or at least the solutions on offer. Only nine per cent of online users have used encryption methods to scramble their email, and a mere five per cent have taken advantage of anonymous Web browsing services in the last year (according to Pew Internet).

To get an idea of how vulnerable you are, find out how much of your personal information is available to the online community by using services such as the Symantec Security Check (**www.symantec.com/securitycheck**). This free service shows how susceptible your system is as it examines your computer's exposure to online security threats.

Cookies: a monster problem

One of the main ways Web site operators can track your movements and create online profiles is by using 'Cookies'. Cookies are text files that are transmitted to your hard drive by Web sites that you have visited. They are used by Web sites to store confidential information which can include your name, address, buying history, Web movement and even passwords and credit card details. This information can be reaccessed by the Web site whenever you log onto their site. Although you would not want this information to be accessed by anyone, Cookies can be used (or rather abused) to track all your online activity by tying together information from various Web sources.

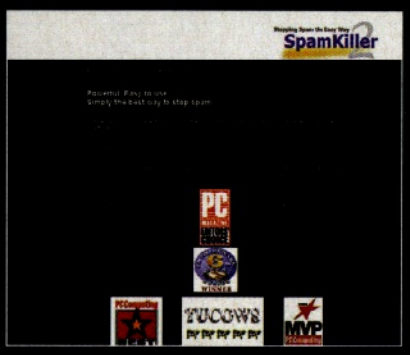
While they can help Web sites to remember your name, personal details and shopping profiles as well as provide users with marginal speed increases, many believe they are more of a nuisance than a blessing. It is therefore surprising that according to a recent report from US privacy company WebSideStory, less than one per cent of Web users disable cookies.

If you don't want Web sites having access to personal information and tracking your every move, you can very easily disable Cookies. To turn off Cookies in Netscape click 'Edit', 'Preferences', 'Advanced' and choose 'Disable Cookies'. In Internet Explorer, choose 'Tools', 'Internet Options', 'Security/Custom Level' and scroll down to the Cookies section and highlight 'Disable Session and Permanent Cookies'.

However, it's important to realise that certain sites (such as Hotmail) will not be accessible if Cookies are not enabled. Luckily Cookies can be temporarily enabled by choosing the 'Warn Me' function (instead of disabling Cookies) in the Web browser preference section. Alternatively, you can keep your Cookies enabled while you are visiting the relevant site and then destroy them after each session. Another option is to download Cookie Management Software which blocks and deletes irrelevant Cookies. Two good examples include the free Cookie Sweeper (**www.cookiesweeper.com**) and Cookie Pal which is available for a free 30-day trial at **www.kburra.com**.

TOP TIP!

Never respond to spam. Many spam messages include a line such as 'If you want to be taken off our mailing list, reply with the word Cancel in the subject line'. Don't be fooled. As often as not, this is just a ploy used by spammers to confirm the validity of your email address. It may even be necessary to use 'spam killer' software to block all spam. For more information, visit the Spam Killer Web site (**www.spamkiller.com**).



JARGON BUSTER

Active X
A Microsoft system allowing programs to be included in a document such as a word document or Web page.

Cookies
Cookies are small text files that are frequently placed on your computer's hard drive by the Web sites you visit. Sites use Cookies to recognise users who have previously visited them, and to customise Web pages accordingly. The problem is that they can be used to collect information which is then passed on to other companies or used for marketing purposes.

Firewall
A combination of hardware and software that acts as a security boundary. Firewalls enable companies to protect their internal computer Network and individual user's to safeguard their own connection. Generally firewalls are used to protect against hacker attacks.

Java
An Internet programming language developed by Sun Microsystems used for a variety of Web-related purposes (especially animation). As with Active X, Java helps Web designers to include executable code in a Web page.

Proxy servers
Proxy servers allow you to visit sites via a different computer so your anonymity remains intact.

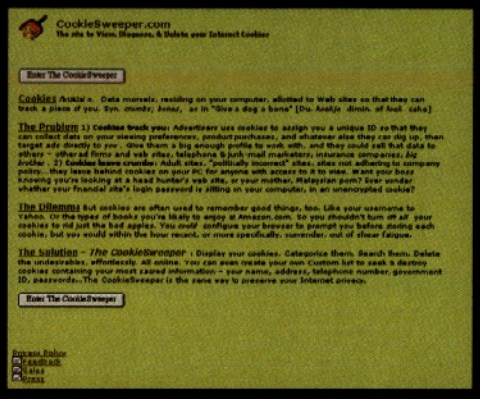
Sandbox
This is a security feature preventing programs from damaging the system they run on. For example, a Java applet loaded from the Web can be run in a sandbox where it is prevented from accessing the hard disk on the browser's computer.

Web proxy services

One other way to get around the Cookie problem is to visit sites via a third-party Web proxy service. A Web proxy server acts as a middleman between your computer and the Web site that you want to visit. When you search the Web your commands are routed through the proxy server which replaces all your identifying information (such as your IP address) with its own, and then it returns the results to you. Instead of capturing your information, Web servers see only the proxy's identity. It therefore serves a similar function to a PO Box for your snail mail.

A good example of a proxy server is the Anonymizer site. (**www.anonymizer.com**). This company offers users a free and paid for Premium service (if you're using Anonymizer's free service, your browser window will display ads and there is a 30-second delay). The Anonymizer fetches any page you want, edits them to remove any security and privacy threats and then delivers it to your desktop. The Premium service even neutralises Cookies, Java, JavaScript, ActiveX, Webbugs and other privacy and security threats. It also lets you scramble your page requests so your ISP or other prying eyes can't read them.

Another highly recommended proxy server is SafeWeb (**www.safeweb.com**). SafeWeb allows Internet users browse the Web anonymously so that no-one can pry into their online communications. Anyone with access to the Internet can immediately use this safe Web service, and it doesn't cost a penny. SafeWeb is compatible will all major platforms and browsers and requires no downloads, installations or configuration.



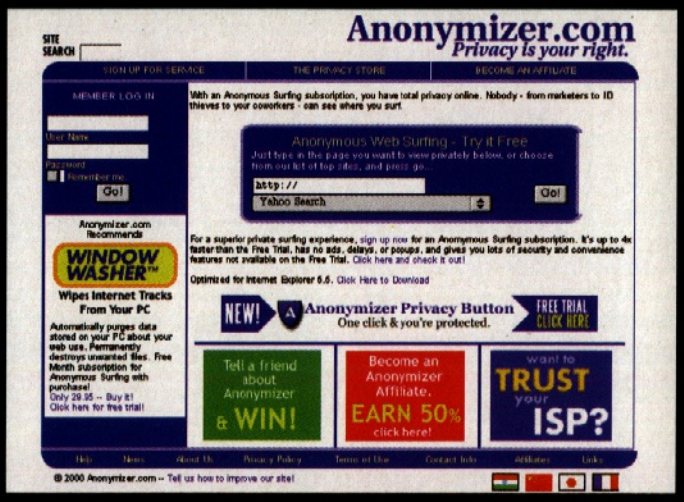
If you are paranoid about Cookies, you can get programs such as CookieSweeper which will block Cookies

Hacker protection

It's not just Web sites that are after your private information. The shadowy figure of the hacker also poses a real threat. Successful hacking attempts could reveal all your private data or result in a hacker having complete control over your PC. In order to safeguard the connection from their IntraNet to the Internet, companies often use secure 'firewall' technology to limit access to their internal information. This is also becoming popular in the home as more and more privacy-conscious Net users are using firewall technology on their personal PCs.

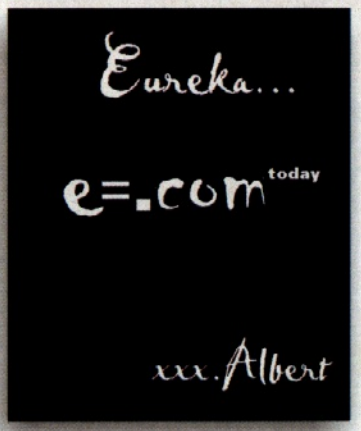
A firewall generally consists of a series of programs that monitor inbound and outbound documents. This can be used to prevent interception from hackers as well as to block files that are infected with a virus. McAfee's personal firewall is available for download at **www.mcafee.com** (£30.75) and Zonelabs offers a free firewall (**www.zonelabs.com**). Another excellent firewall utility is TermiNet (**www.danu.ie**) which allows users to block incoming or outgoing traffic.

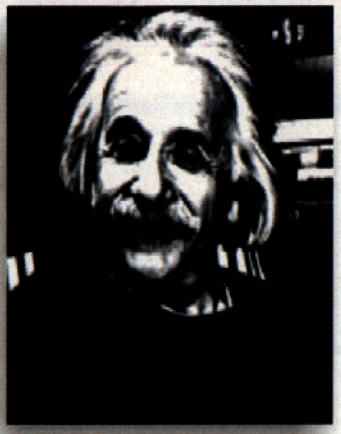
It is also important to think very carefully when coming up with passwords for your computer and Internet services. A »



Proxy servers are an excellent way to protect yourself against security risks. Services like Anonymizer.com will scan any Web site you visit for security or privacy threats

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to get the most out of the internet





"...if only i'd thought of this yesterday....i'd be a .com millionaire..he he"

- Internet Access
- Web Hosting
- Web Design
- Co-location
- E-Commerce
- Search Engine Submission
- Leased Lines
- Reseller Packages

I'm immensely grateful for your timely responsiveness, your technical know how and your willingness to go the distance. The sales and support team at Freezone Internet is dedicated and professional.....Dealing with ISP's from Calgary to Copenhagen, I continue to be impressed with what I see at Freezone Internet. Please keep up the great work.

Christopher Hall www.eurotas.org

I never hesitate to recommend my clients to use Freezone for either hosting their domain name or as an ISP. Their service, help and friendliness are of an unusually high quality in the world of IT.
Julie M. Gale - Director - Lookwest Designs Ltd.
www.lookwest.co.uk

FREEZONE internet

WorldPay

FREEZONE INTERNET is an approved WHICH? Web Trader

info@freezone.co.uk www.freezone.co.uk

FREEZONE INTERNET

Providing Quality Internet Services for your www.world

0845 1170366

Firewalls protect information against attacks from hackers. You can use the same technology with software from McAfee

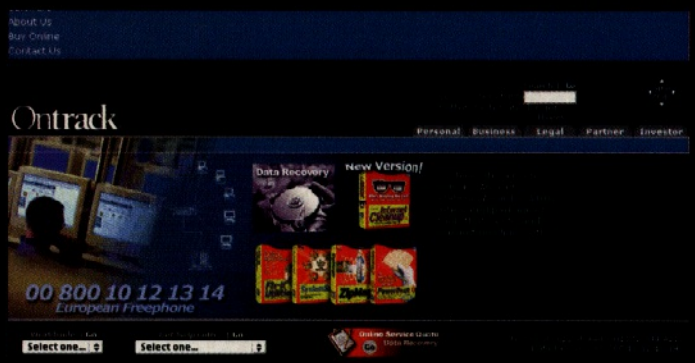
» computer password must never be a person's initials, nickname, child's name, birth date, home town or favourite football team. Some security experts, such as Michael A Covington from the Artificial Intelligence Centre at the University of Georgia, claim that a password should not even be a correctly spelled word in any language. According to Covington, a "common way to crack accounts is to try all the words in a large dictionary as well as all names and abbreviations that are associated with a person." One possibility is to have a combination of letters and numbers.

Staying anonymous

Whenever you are requested to provide information online you must choose how much information you are willing to give each site. To help protect yourself online, avoid providing Web sites with personal details wherever possible. If you do fill in forms on Web sites, ensure that you don't give the site permission to pass your email address and personal information on to other companies. Often this involves unticking a box that has already (kindly) been ticked on your behalf. If there is no such box then read the privacy policy and if there is no privacy policy, then don't even consider leaving your details.

If you use Netscape Navigator, you can remove your personal information (such as your email address and name) from your browser so that the only information available is your ISP address and geographical location. However, you do have to remember to restore it when you want to read your mail later.

Another good tip if you want to stay completely anonymous is to make sure you clean any residual files that have been downloaded by your computer which can detail your online experience. Internet Guard Dog (£30.75 from McAfee.com) provides you with a way to monitor Cookies, banner ads, chatroom activity and any personal information that is requested over the Internet. It also clears your browser's cache and history file after each Web visit. Internet Cleanup (£19.99 from **www.ontrack.co.uk**) will erase data trails when browsing the Internet. It also deletes SpyWare programs which are used to spy on your computer and Internet usage.



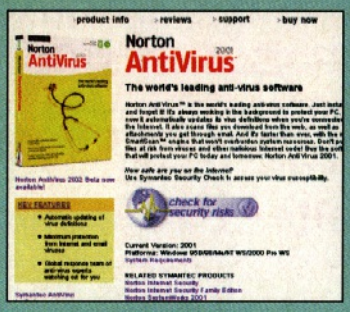
*Internet CleanUp from Ontrack (**www.ontrack.co.uk**) will erase all the evidence of what sites you have visited. It will also block SpyWare programs which are used to monitor your browsing habits*

ActiveX, and Java

Even when anonymity is maintained, there are other security issues to contend with. For instance, Java and ActiveX – the two systems that let people attach computer programs to Web pages (and allow Web pages to be much more dynamic than they could be otherwise) – can cause potentially hostile programs to be downloaded and run on your computer, just because you visited a Web page. The downloaded program could try to access or damage the data on your machine, for example, to insert a virus.

ActiveX programs come with digital signatures from the author of the program and anybody else who chooses to endorse the program. The main danger in ActiveX is that you make the wrong

8 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR NET CONNECTION MORE SECURE



Protect against viruses

By taking care with attachments and spam messages, the threat from email viruses can be reduced. ActiveX and Java programs also need to be downloaded with care. You can pick up anti-virus software from Norton (**www.symantec.com**).

Use different addresses

Consider setting up a separate email address specifically for when you have to give your email details away. Web-based accounts are best for this, good ones to try are Another.com (**www.another.com**) or Hotmail (**www.hotmail.com**).

Browse with care

When you are browsing the Web make sure you don't give out information unnecessarily. If you use Netscape Navigator as your browser (**http://home.netscape.com**) you can actually remove your personal details.

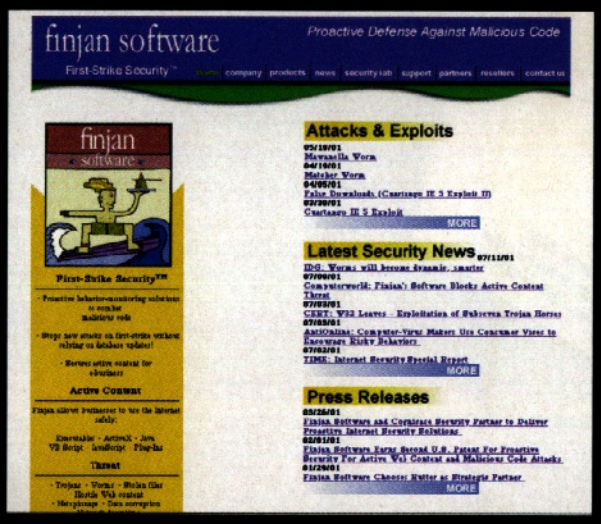
Use a Web proxy service

Services such as Anonymizer (**www.anonymizer.com**) enable you to visit Web sites anonymously to protect your privacy when browsing the Web. This excellent service will check for security risks on any site you visit.

decision about whether to accept a program. The only way to avoid this scenario is to refuse all programs, except those that come from people you know well.

Java accepts all downloaded programs and runs them within a security 'sandbox' (a security 'fence' that surrounds the program and keeps it away from your private data.) As long as there are no problems with the sandbox, you are safe. However, when Java security does break down, the potential consequences are equally as bad as any of those associated with ActiveX.

If you want to play it safe, Anonymizer has the power to neutralise rogue Java and ActiveX programs as does Finjan's Surfin Shield (£99). Also, firewalls such as Norton's Personal Firewall have the ability to block Java applets and ActiveX controls. An excellent resource on the dangers of Java and Active X can be found at the Malicious Code Research Centre (**www.finjan.com**).



Mount a full-scale attack on rogue Java and ActiveX programs by installing a program such as Finjan's Surfin Shield

Email viruses

Although Active X and Java can be potential virus hazards, email is the most common culprit. Indeed, one of the more negative effects of the exponential growth in email use, has been the parallel rise in computer viruses. According to Mark Sunner, Chief Technical Officer at virus monitoring company Message Labs, "Viruses are appearing at an increasingly alarming rate, and the costs are running into millions. Viruses are getting smarter and more lethal".

One of the main misconceptions surrounding email viruses is that they are confined to attachments. Although some of the most well known viruses, such as those known as 'Melissa' and the 'Love Bug', have been propagated via attached files, this is not always the case. Unfortunately, some viruses are released the moment you open the email.

As most viruses are distributed via unsolicited email you should think twice before opening any spam messages. Ideally you should invest in up-to-date anti-virus software such as Norton AntiVirus Software 2001. Finally, make regular back-ups of your computer files and programs, in case of a virus attack.

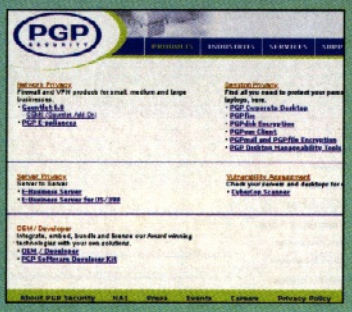
Smooth sailing

Our intention here hasn't been to alarm you – it's quite possible to never receive a virus or have any security problems whatsoever. But it is helpful to have an idea of what kind of dangers are out there, and to know what steps you can take to minimise risk. ■

TOP TIP!

Stay informed. About (**www.about.com**), Symantec (**www.symantec.com**), Cookie Central (**www.cookiecentral.com**), Cotse (**www.cotse.com**), Firewall Guide (**www.firewallguide.com**) and Mail Abuse Prevention System (**www.maps.com**) all include up-to-date information on privacy issues.

The writer of this feature, Matt Haig, is an Internet journalist and author. His new book, *Email Essentials* (Kogan Page, £14.99), covers a variety of security related topics. Matt is also the author of five other Internet books, including *E-business Essentials* (Kogan Page/Sunday Times £7.99), and *The E-Marketing Handbook* (Kogan Page, £25).



Encrypt email

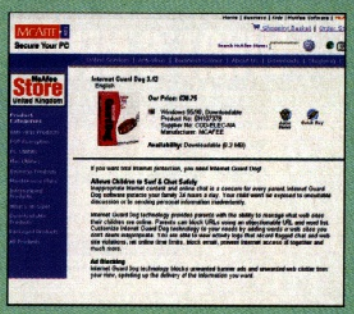
Pretty Good Privacy (PGP) enables email messages to be scrambled and unscrambled according to the user's wishes. This makes sure that your emails cannot be read as they are being sent. You can access it from **www.pgp.com.**

Conduct security checks

Sites such as Symantec (**www.symantec.com**) provide free tools that test your susceptibility to security and virus threats. If you run your system through one of these, you can then act upon any weak security areas.

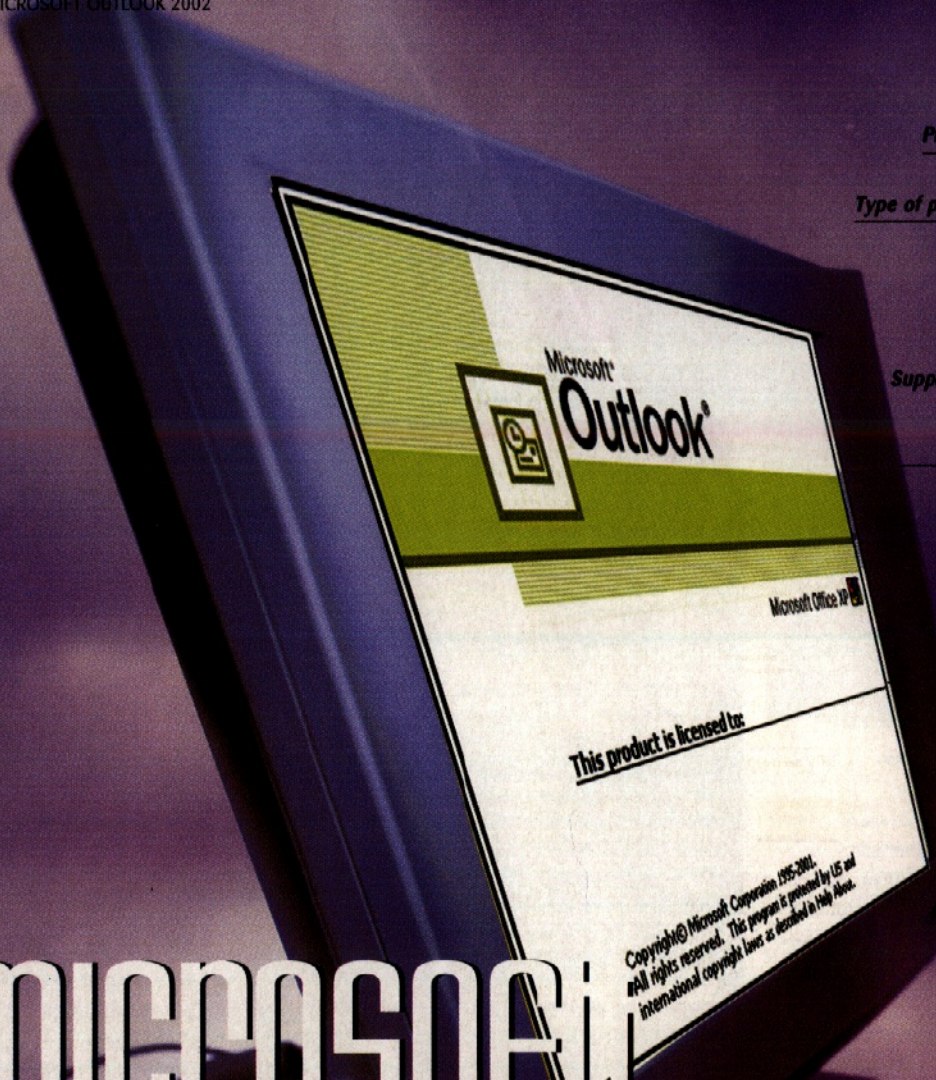
Manage your Cookies

Although Cookies can be beneficial, and won't damage your PC, they can pose a threat to your privacy. Luckily, they can be neutralised by using Cookie management software. A good one to try is CookieCentral (**www.cookiecentral.com**)



Clean residual files

The Internet Guard Dog, which is published by McAfee (**www.mcafee.com**), removes files from your computer (such as those that can reveal personal information) after each of your Net browsing sessions.



Program: Microsoft Outlook 2002
URL: www.microsoft.com/uk
Type of program: Personal Information Manager (PIM)
File size: 245Mb hard drive space required, 50Mb more space required for PCs using Windows 98, Windows 98 SE or Windows NT 4.0
Supported OS Windows 98/SE/ME, Windows NT4, with Service Pack 6 (SP6) or Later, Windows 2000 or later
Cost: Comes Part of Office XP; Office XP Standard £429, upgrade £199; Office XP Professional £519, upgrade £269
Contact: www.microsoft.com/uk/office

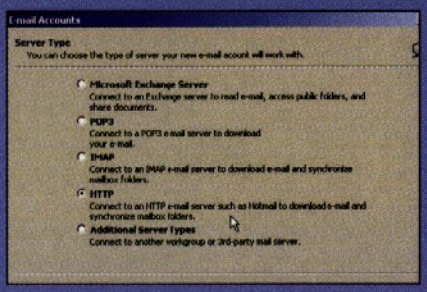
MICROSOFT OUTLOOK 2002

MICROSOFT'S FLAGSHIP PERSONAL INFORMATION MANAGER HAS EVOLVED INTO AN ALMOST INDISPENSABLE TOOL. **CLIVE PARKER** TRIES OUT THE ALL-NEW OUTLOOK 2002

WHAT'S NEW IN OUTLOOK 2002?

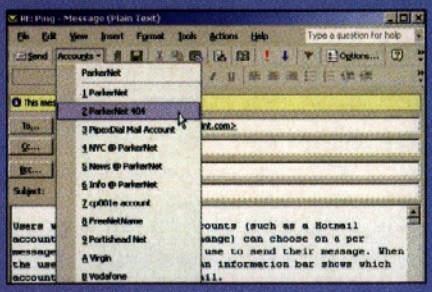
Autocomplete addresses

In previous versions of Outlook, the application searched for an email address after you had typed in a name. Now as you enter an email address, Outlook automatically recognises it and completes the name based on previously sent emails to the recipient.



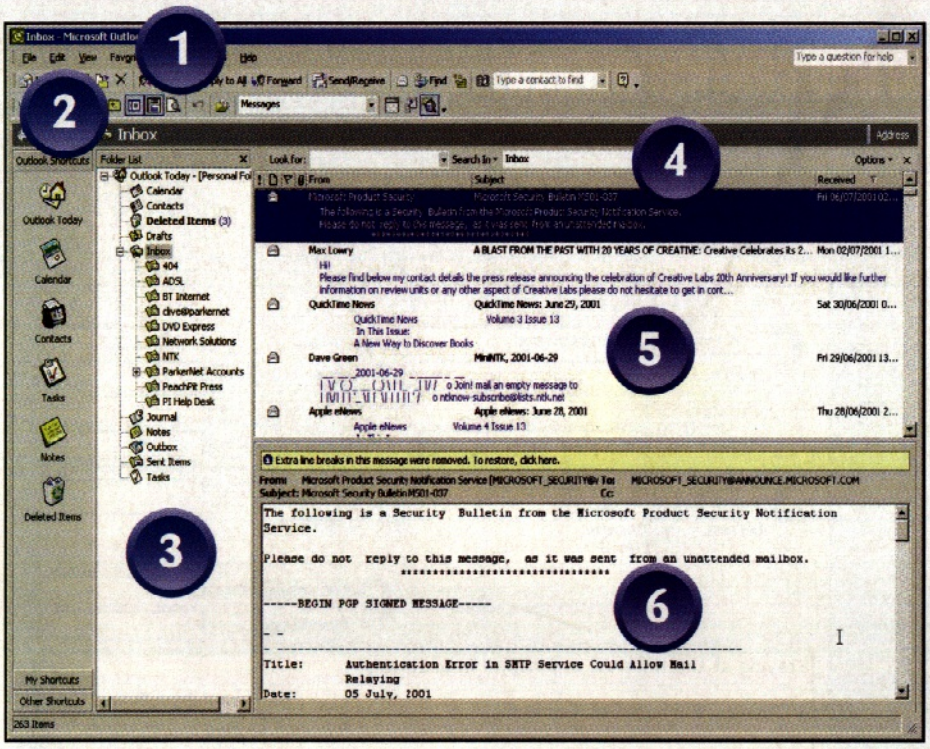
Hotmail accounts

You can now set up access to your Hotmail account or other Web-based email services from within Outlook. Select the 'Email Accounts' command from the 'Tools' menu, add a new account, select 'HTTP' and enter details of your Web mail service.



Send using...

If you multiple email accounts you can choose which account to use to send your message. When you choose an account from the Accounts list, a bar appears at the top of the message showing which account is being used to send the email.



1 Toolbar:

Almost every aspect of Outlook 2002 can be accessed and controlled from the toolbars. As is usual with Office XP applications, the toolbar in Outlook 2002 is completely customisable.

2 Outlook Bar:

The Outlook Bar is a handy tool that enables you to easily hop from one tool to another at the click of a mouse button.

3 Folder Bar:

The Folder Bar contains a list of subsections within each of the main Outlook 2002 tools such as customised mail boxes for email.

4 Find Bar:

The new Find Bar tool enables you to quickly search for any item within any of the Outlook 2002 tools.

5 Main View:

The main view pane changes depending on the tool you are using. Here, the Inbox is selected so a list of email messages is displayed with the first few lines visible using the AutoPreview function.

6 Preview Pane:

The Preview Pane is now works with all Outlook 2002 tools and enables you to view the content of emails, contacts and so on without opening them in a separate form.

Outlook 2002 is the latest version of Microsoft's all-conquering Personal Information Manager (PIM) to roll off the never ending production line and comes as part of the new Office XP suite of applications. Most people regard Outlook as being the 'big brother' of Outlook Express and think of Outlook as simply being a more powerful email application. However, Outlook 2002 goes beyond just being an email application.

Most Outlook users are introduced to the application in an office environment, usually at work where it is the default email and information manager tool for many businesses. Sadly, most business users with little computer expertise only see the email functions and don't even realise that there are a host of other tools within the program just waiting to be accessed.

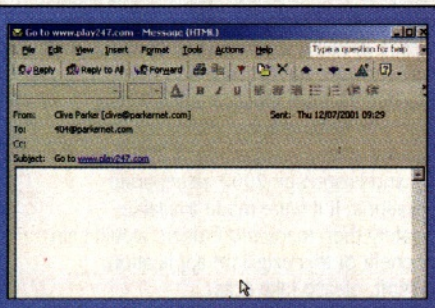
Faster, easier, smarter

Outlook 2002 is designed as an information manager. With the amount of time you can spend working with email, contacts, tasks and appointments in a busy office environment, even completing a few tasks faster and more efficiently can make you more productive. While Outlook 2002 may look complicated, the easiest way to learn any aspect of the program is to actually use it. The tools contained within Outlook 2002 have a gentle learning curve and they can bring all of your organisational tasks within one easy to use tool, making working more intuitive and keeping everything in one place. The new Office XP style interface looks a little different from previous versions of Office tools including Outlook, but it's easier on the eye and simple to master.

The program uses Microsoft's favourite style of interface; a vertical bar in the left-hand pane with large friendly icons providing shortcuts to all aspects of the program with all content appearing in the main window pane. Switching from email to contacts to the calendar is as simple as clicking on the icon in the Outlook Shortcut bar. A Folder List bar is also available enabling you to see subsections within each area of the program. Both the Outlook Shortcuts and Folder List bars can be toggled on and off at will from within the Views menu.

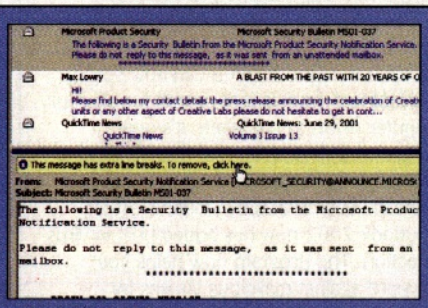
Email becomes more powerful

Most of the big changes are concealed with the guts of the program, Email Accounts wizard has been extensively revamped so



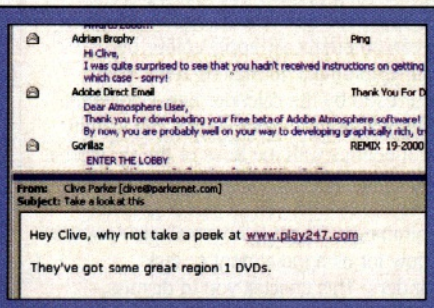
Hyperlinks in subject line

Outlook 2002 email messages now recognise URLs typed into the subject line. This enables you to browse to the Web site by clicking on the link in the subject line without having to cut and paste the address into your Web browser.



Text cleanup

Outlook 2002 automatically cleans up plain text in email messages that contains extra line breaks. You can set it up to automatically remove the extra line when you open an email message, preview the message in the preview pane, or when you print out the message.



Preview pane

The preview pane in Outlook 2002 lets you follow a hyperlink, respond to meeting requests and display the properties of an email address without having to open the message in a separate window. The Preview Pane also works with other Outlook 2002 tools.

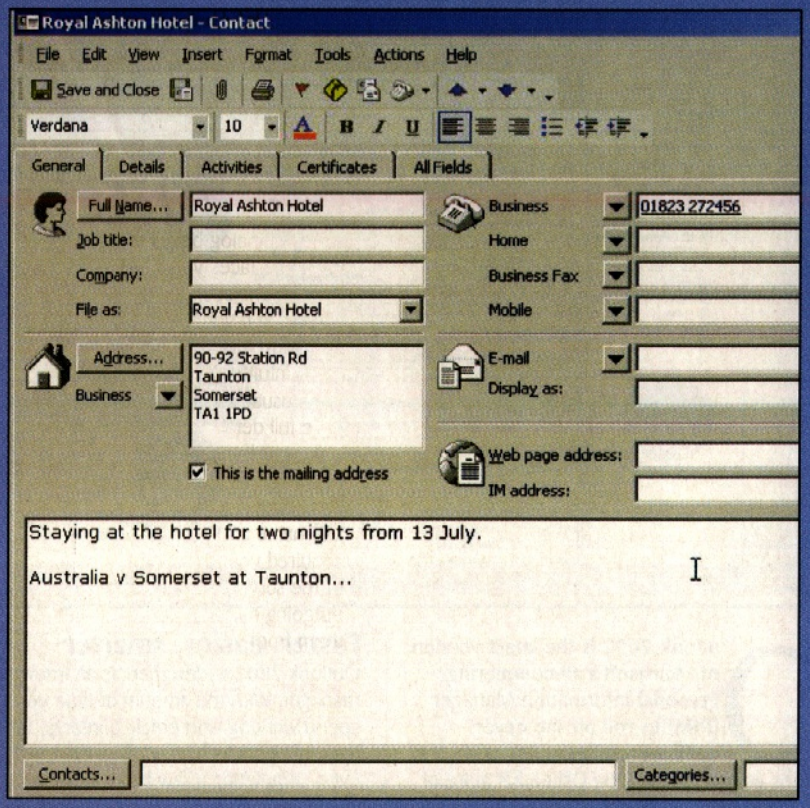
SORT OUT EMAIL ADDRESSES AND CONTACT DETAILS

THE CONTACT TOOL in Outlook 2002 may strike you as being just a glorified address book, but it's much more than that. When you create a new contact you can enter as little or as much information about the contact that you wish. It can be as simple as just a name and email address, or you can expand the details to include job title, company, full postal address and a range of phone and fax numbers. You can also add extra email address (most people have more than one these days) and Web site address. Plus there's a large area where you can write notes. And all this is just in the General tab.

Add birthdays and anniversaries

The Details tab lets you expand on the basic information; you can start to build up a much more detailed record of the individual concerned. There are fields where you can add the contact's personal details such as birthdays, anniversaries and partner name. You can also add details of the contact's manager and his assistant, if any. Netmeeting settings can be entered and you can set Internet free/busy details. The Activities tab lists all Outlook activities associated with the contact. You can list every email sent to or received from the contact, plus you can also displays notes and reminders you may have set up. This can be very useful for tracking down that elusive email.

Once you start to use Contacts you will discover that it a very handy tool indeed.



that creating new accounts is completely different from earlier versions of Outlook. The Options control panel has also been redesigned with more options and a new look to many existing aspects of the program. The main difference is in the Mail Setup area; new options are available to set up send and receive preferences, the ability to specify data storage directories on your hard drive and revamped dial-up options.

Options for the Calendar have improved too. You can now identify your most important appointments using the new colour-coding system. You can apply a specific colour to individual appointments or you can automatically apply colour by creating automatic formatting rules. Each colour used by the calendar has a label that you can customise, so now you can identify your meetings with the boss or the tax man at a glance. Outlook 2002 has also improved the way it reminds you of meetings and appointments. There is now a single reminder window for all appointment or task reminders. This enables you to dismiss, snooze or open one or all of the reminders at the same time.

Fans of MSN Instant Messenger will be pleased to find out that Outlook 2002 now features support for Instant Messenger. When you open a contact card or an email message – or even if you view a message in the Preview Pane – you can tell if that person is currently online and you can immediately fire up an MSN Messenger session with them from within Outlook 2002. The Instant Messenger option can be toggled on and off from within the Options control panel.

Look and find

One significant improvement that many existing Outlook users will applaud is to the built-in Find facility. It is now a lot easier for you to find important email messages, appointments or tasks with the improved Find bar. The new bar enables you to access search features and functions previously available only if you used the Advanced Find tool. With the Find bar you can now specify which folders you want to search for on your computer or on the network. It's now possible to with both Find and Advance Find to temporarily halt a search in progress and restart the search exactly where it left off.

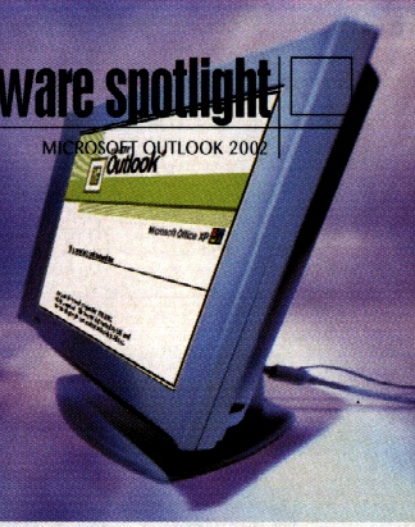
Outlook 2002 now has added built-in virus protection. The program now helps you safeguard against malicious viruses by blocking any email attachments associated with unsafe files, preventing downloaded programs from gaining access to your address book or sending email on your behalf. If any of these activities occur you are notified and given the option of continuing with the action. This prevents the propagation and spreading of the virus to any other users. At a business level, it gives system administrators options to customise the Outlook security settings to meet the exact needs of their business.

Probably one of the most useful aspects of Outlook 2002 is the Contacts tool. Outlook Express has a built-in address book in the same way as all other email applications. Outlook 2002 takes the basic address book and raises it to the nth degree – see the Contacts boxout for full details.

In our opinion, Outlook 2002 is the best version yet and it stands head and shoulders above any possible competition. One major oversight is that it is only available as part of Office XP. Many small office and home users would benefit from Outlook 2002 being available as a standalone application in the same way as you can get Word 2002, Excel 2002 and FrontPage 2002 as separate applications. If it were made available separately then many more users would gain the benefit of this excellent application. Microsoft, please take note.

THE VERDICT

Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Value	★★★★★
Overall	★★★★★



SETTING UP EMAIL ACCOUNTS IN OUTLOOK 2002

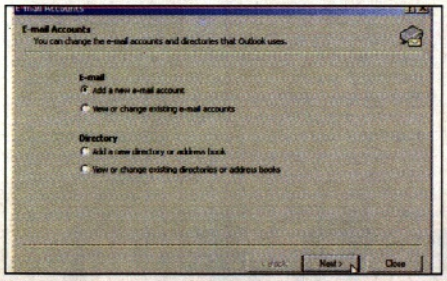
THE NEW EMAIL accounts interface in Outlook 2002 enables you to easily add new email accounts into the application – now including Web-based email accounts – or to modify existing email accounts, directories or address books. Outlook 2002 still supports the standard POP3/SMTP and Microsoft Exchange Server email accounts, and now you can also set up IMAP email accounts, HTTP email accounts (such as Hotmail, Yahoo!, AltaVista and so on), and other third party email systems.

The look of the email accounts interface in Outlook 2002 has changed radically from previous versions. Instead of the old tabbed control panel look of earlier versions, the Outlook 2002 version uses a more form-based series of dialog boxes that are more like the form interfaces you can find in database applications such as Access 2002. While a little confusing if you are used to the old version, the new form based method is actually simpler and more intuitive to use.

As usual, you need to make sure that you have full details of your email account settings with your Internet service provider when creating a new email account in Outlook 2002. You should have been provided with your username and password details when you acquired your account. If you don't have details of the servers (usually called the incoming and outgoing mail servers) you should be able to get them from your ISP's Web site help pages.

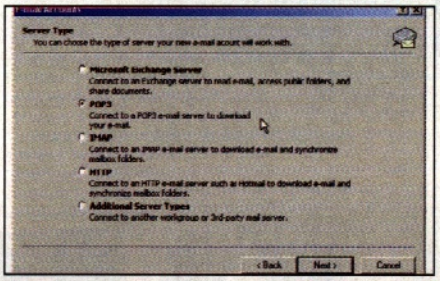
1 Open accounts

As in older versions of Outlook, the wizard for setting up email accounts is accessed from the Tools menu. Go to the 'Tools' menu and select the 'E-mail Accounts…' command from the drop down menu.



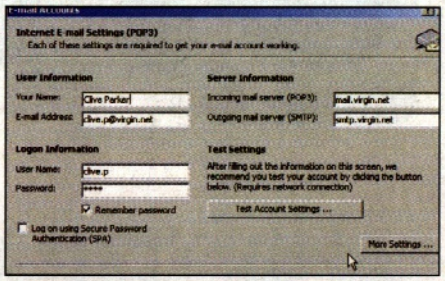
2 Make your choice

The first page of the wizard asks if you want to create a new account, modify or view existing accounts or work with directories or address books. Click on the 'Add a new e-mail account' radio button then select 'Next'.



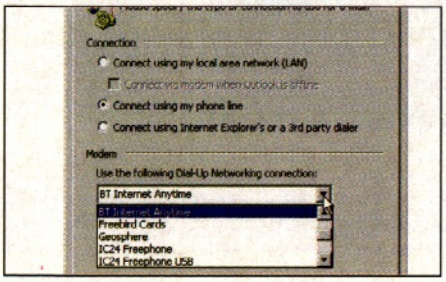
3 What type?

Now you have to choose what type of email account you want to set up. Most people will be using POP3 so select the 'POP3' radio button then click the 'Next' button.



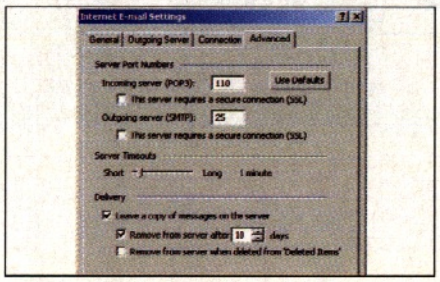
4 Main settings

In the main settings window you must fill in each field before your email will work. You will need your username and password, server names and your email address. Click 'More Settings' for extra details.



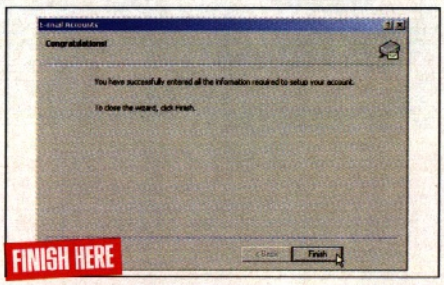
5 Choose a connection

You must tell Outlook 2002 what dial-up connection to use for the new account you have set up. Click on the 'Connection' tab and choose the correct dial-up connection from the Modem menu.



6 Leave it

If you are collecting email from more than one location you will want to leave email on the server. Click the 'Advanced' tab and set the Delivery options to a suitable level. Seven to ten days should be adequate.



7 Finishing up

Click on the 'OK' button to exit from the More Settings dialog. Now click on the 'Next' button in the main POP3 settings window to save the details. On the final page of the wizard click the 'Finish' button.

MAKE YOUR SITE STICKY

Encourage visitors to stick to your Web site by using the latest gadgets and add-ons and you'll see your hit count go through the roof. **Mark Newman** explains...

It's easy enough for you to create an interesting and attractive Web site, but it's quite another thing to create one that attracts Web users in their droves and encourages them to keep coming back.

One solution is to make your site 'sticky' with tempting content that gets users hooked. The good news is that making your site 'sticky' needn't be expensive or particularly time-consuming.

There are hundreds of content providers on the Net providing polls, games, email, forms, newsfeeds and more for your site. Many of these gadgets are completely free and can be easily added to your Web pages in minutes.

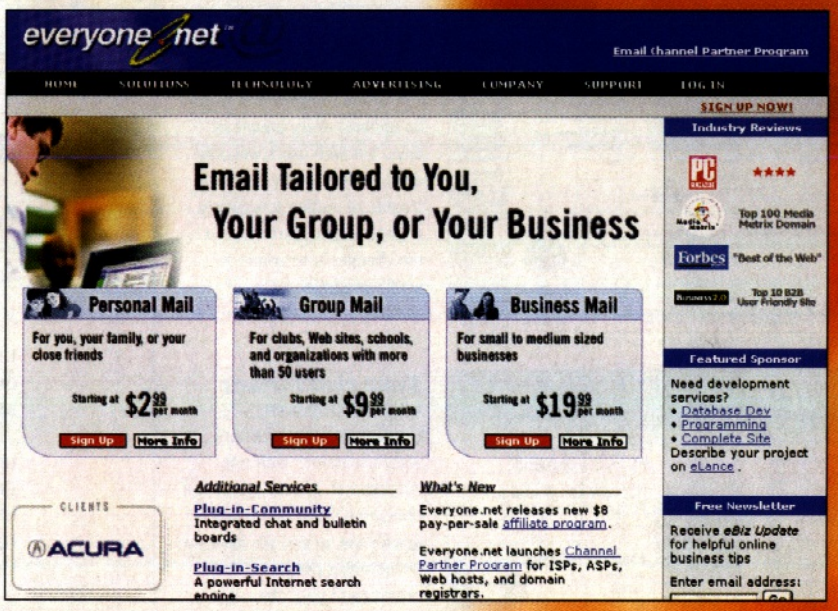
It's a painless way of transforming a humble home page into a vibrant, interactive site.

Add a live newsfeed

Ensuring the content on your Web pages is always fresh and regularly updated is very important if you want people to keep returning to your site. Although most site designers can't afford the time (or money) to do updates throughout the day, this doesn't mean you can't have regularly updated content on your site.

Sign up to a syndicated news service to add live news feeds to your site for free. You can, for instance, add news, sports and entertainment stories from the Guardian newspaper on your site at **www.guardianunlimited.co.uk/distribution.**

Rather than signing up to one individual service, you can also pick feeds from affiliate news sites such as iSyndicate (**http://uk.isyndicate.com**), Moreover (**www.moreover.com**) and Vibrant Media (**www.vibrantmedia.com**). Such services offer users a wide choice of news, photos, weather forecasts and horoscopes from thousands of sources.



Encourage visitors to create email accounts on your site and then come back to check for messages using Everyone.net

Most of the content is free – and it's all easily integrated on your Web pages by copying and pasting HTML code. Whatever subject your site is based on, there's certain to be a related newsfeed out there.

Get your visitors chatting

A messageboard – a Web page where visitors can leave a message – is a highly effective way of getting people to come back to your site. They allow several different conversations or topics to be discussed at once – and if they become active with hot topics they will rapidly become one of the most used areas of your site.

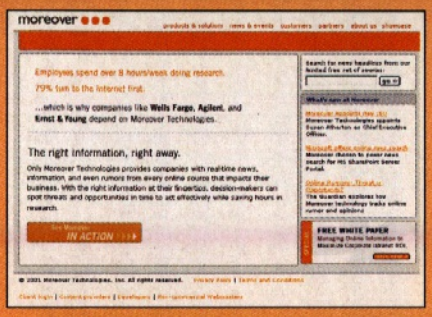
You can sign up for free messageboard services at ezboard (**www.ezboard.com**) and HTML Gear (**www.htmlgear.com**) but you will be required to display an ad on your messageboard. That's the 'price' you pay for using a free service.

If you don't mind paying for your messageboard – and want the best service available plus complete control over the board's appearance –

Games are popular and a very good method of making your site sticky

Let visitors leave messages for one another on your site with a messageboard from www.ezboard.com

TOP 10 STICKY SITE ADD-ONS

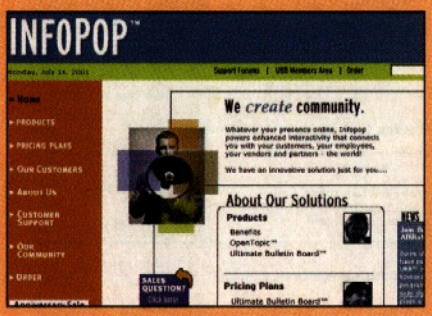


Add newsfeeds
www.moreover.com

You can select from a choice of hundreds of news categories and by adding some simple HTML code onto your page, in minutes you'll have it up and running. It's a valuable addition to the front page of your site.

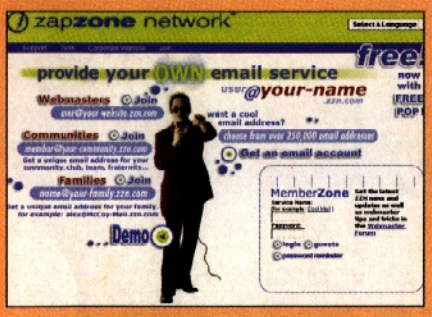
Create e-newsletters
www.topica.com

The content of your site might be updated every couple of days, but Web users will only discover this if they go to the trouble of visiting it regularly. A good way to alert them to the changes is to create an email newsletter.



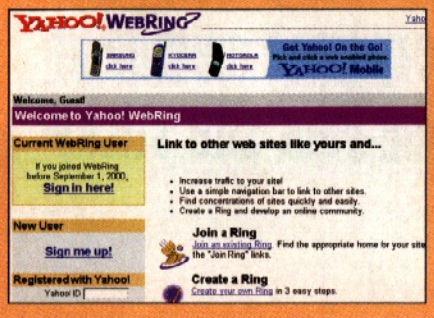
Start chat forums
www.infopop.com

Let your Web site's visitors start discussions with one another with a chat forum. The Ultimate Bulletin Board can be quickly set up and are ideal for encouraging people to keep returning to your site. .



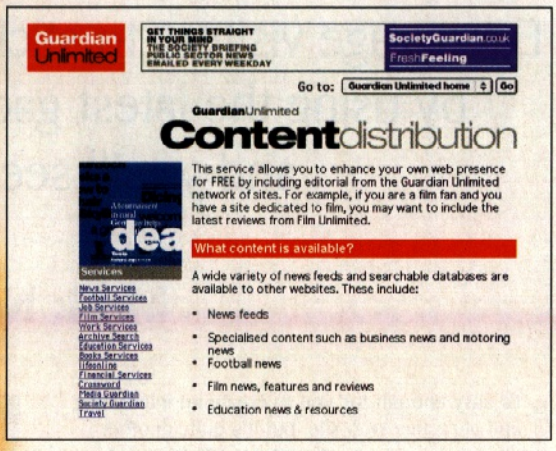
Offer free email
www.zzn.com

Encourage your Web site's visitors to set up a free email account on your site and then keep returning to check for messages. ZapZone is an excellent option – it lets you brand your email colours and logos to that of your site.



Join a Webring
http://dir.webring.yahoo.com/rw

A Webring links a number of sites together, allowing users move from one to the other in a continuous loop. Yahoo! Webrings lets you search a range of Webrings on various topics and join the one most relevant to your site.



Add a constantly updated newsfeed from The Guardian to your Web site for free at www.guardianunlimited.co.uk/distribution

then the Ultimate Bulletin Board from Infopop (**www.infopop.com**) is an excellent choice.

Chat rooms are another simple facility to add to your site. Consider Parachat (**www.parachat.com**) and MultiCity (**www.multicity.com/webmasters**) which are both Java-based and easy to configure.

QuickChat (**www.quickchat.org**) is slightly different to the rest of the chat rooms since it uses IRC technology through your Web browser while BeSeen (**www.beseen.com**) offers a whole heap of free chatting services that are very simple to set up.

Although a chat room is a great addition to your site take note that unless you're online 24 hours a day, it's sensible to have specific chat times (or just at weekends, for example) when you are guaranteed to be active in the room. You don't want to put visitors off by getting them to visit empty rooms where no-one is there to talk!

Add email to your site

If you encourage your Web site's visitors to set up a free email account at your Web site, they are certain to return to it time after time to check for messages. It's a proven way to make your hit counts rocket. The good news is that it needn't cost you anything to add this service to your site. Numerous sites offer it for free.

ZapZone (**www.zzn.com**) is an excellent option. It not only lets you brand your email colours and logos to that of your site, but also lets you promote your site in every outgoing message using a small tagline. You can also keep in touch with your users using the mailing list feature – another way to keep telling them about how great your site is and why they must return!

*Vibrant Media (**www.vibrantmedia.com**) lets you add free, constantly updated news to your site in a matter of minutes*

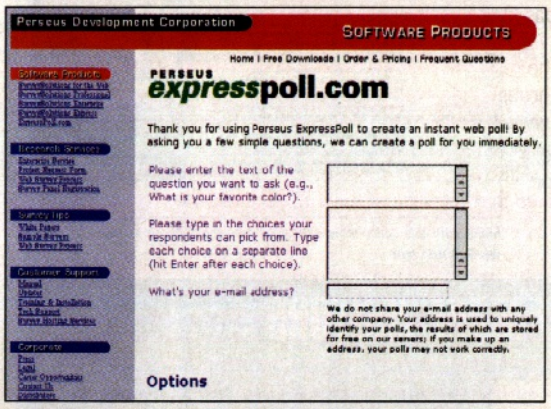
Everyone.net (**www.everyone.net**) is also a highly recommended email, search and community service that gives you the ability to set up an account on your Web site in less than an hour. It's very easy to use and only charges a small monthly fee.

BigMailBox (**www.bigmailbox.com**) is also worthy of close inspection. It lets you add Web-based email to your site to allow visitors to create their own account. Its service is already in use by more than 32,000 Web sites. While it's totally free, BigMailBox does insert small adverts into each message to finance the service – which seems fair to us.

Put polls on your pages

An excellent way to get your site's visitors actively involved in the content of your site is to give them an opinion poll so they can vote on topical issues. If they can see how other people are voting it's not only interesting but also helps them to feel at home with your site if there are other like-minded Web users using it.

You'll need to change the poll topic frequently to maintain interest – but since polls are dead simple to set up and add to your site, this should be no problem.



*Give your visitors a voice! Let them vote on hot topics at **www.perseus.com/softwareprod/express_poll.html***

One of the best services is Perseus ExpressPoll (**www.perseus.com/softwareprod/express_poll.html**) which automatically creates the HTML code for you to drop onto your Web page and, uniquely, lets you kill the advertising banners that are so often forced upon you with other free services.

Among the other polling sites to consider are PollNow (**www.pollnow.com**) and EZPolls (**http://ezpolls.mycomputer.com**) which also don't require programming or scripting on your part since the polls are based on their server and linked to from your page. Please note, that advertising is displayed with them.

Overall, polls are very easy to add to your pages and are a great way of making your site's visitors feel they have a say in the content of your site.

Fun-packed games

Games are universally popular and are a proven method of making your Web site sticky. AddictionZone (**www.addictionzone.com**) lets you add a complete games portal to your site for free – allowing visitors to access more than 650 games and trivia competitions.

SubPortal (**www.subportal.com**) gives you the ability to ad competitions to your site and, hopefully, increase traffic as users return again and again to enter them. This is actually quite a useful gadget for you since you can learn

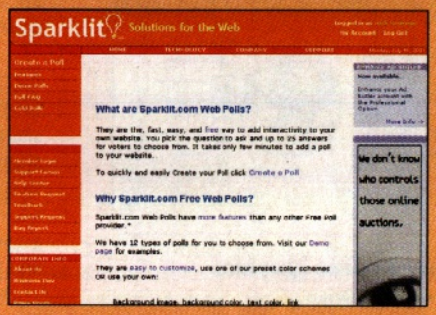
TOP 10 STICKY SITE ADD-ONS

Forms for your site
www.formany.com

Rather than using a basic email text link to let your site's visitors contact you, create an email form instead with a handful of text fields and radio buttons to be filled in. At this site you can do it without spending a single penny.

Polls and surveys
www.sparklit.com

Turn visitors into voters by adding interactivity to your site with a poll. Here, you can start polls and surveys for free on your site and get them up and running on your site in just a few minutes. Very easy.



Money-making links
www.cj.com

Commission Junction gives you the ability to earn cash from your Web site without any risk by adding links to existing products and sites. Whenever a visitor to your site buys one of the products you get a cut of the profits.

Get gaming
www.prizegames.com

Add exciting, fun games to your site in just minutes using this free service. It's certain to keep your visitors entertained for hours and ensure they keep coming back for more.

Make your site searchable
www.picosearch.com

There's no point on having loads of great content on your site if visitors can't quickly and easily find it. One way to help them is to add a free search box and button to your site to help them hunt it down. This service is great.

MUST-SEE RESOURCES

SITES THAT EVERY WEB SITE BUILDER SHOULD VISIT

Quality free graphics
www.prodraw.net
A stunning collection of 3D animations, rendered pics, buttons and clipart for you to plunder for your site's pages. Top quality content.

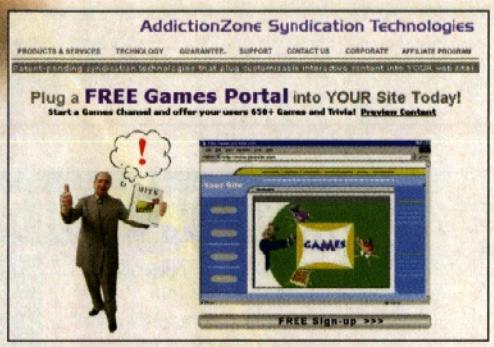
Handy HTML help
www.htmlgoodies.com
Featuring a zany cartoon of Web design guru Joe Burns, this site lives up to its name by giving you the inside info on all kinds of goodies.

Gadgets galore
www.mycomputer.com
A huge collection of gadgetry, goodies and general goodness! A few trips here will give you plenty of ideas on how to grow your site. Remember, no-one can resist a gadget.

Site bolt-ons and extras
www.zy.com
Billed as being the quick and easy way to add all sorts of items to your Web site, zy.com provides you with heaps of add-ons and extras.

Easy-to-use scripts
www.javascriptsource.com
With a simply whopping 643 scripts on the go, even the meanest of Java plunderers will be more than satisfied with their haul here.

Sticky site content
www.findsticky.com
This is definitely the place to be to find all the best in 'sticky' content for your Web site that's sure to keep visitors coming back to your pages time after time.



Action-packed games and quizzes can easily be added to your site at www.addictionzone.com

lots about your site's visitors by viewing the demographic stats from your contest signups.

More basic games – yet equally as 'sticky' ones – are available from HTML Games (**www.htmlgames.com/home.htm**), which provides some golden oldies such as Othello and World Cup Soccer. Add them to your site and give your site's visitors some fun!

Tips and tricks

Chances are that if you've got a massive sprawling site filled to the brim with content, your visitors will appreciate a search engine. This saves them having to spend time manually visiting every page of your site in the hope of finding content. With a search engine in place, they only have to type in a key word and they're provided with a list of relevant pages.

The best customizable search facilities are PicoSearch (**www.picosearch.com**) and Atomz (**www.atomz.com**), which are both free and let you add a small search box to your site for visitors to use.

People will be more inclined to come back to your site if there's always something different to look forward to. The problem with this is that it can take you a lot of time to manually update your pages on a regular basis.

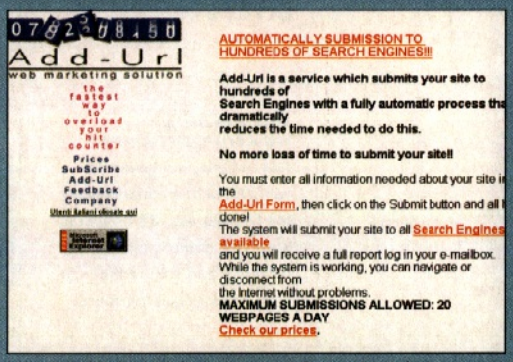
With randomly rotating content, however, you can bring up a different image or piece of text each time that one of your visitors comes to your site. With just a few lines of JavaScript, you can guarantee that your site has a fresh feel every time. Visit **www.javascriptsource.com** for examples of the Java version of this script, or **www.worldwidemart.com/scripts** for Perl and CGI alternatives.

Remember that lots of new 'sticky' content providers are continuously being launched so check that you're using the freshest, latest gadgets by visiting Web site content directories like Bring Me Hits (**www.bringmehits.com**) and Free Sticky (**www.freesticky.com**) regularly.

Go for the gadgets with most mainstream appeal and you'll not only make your site look better, but you'll be guaranteed a constant flow of visitors, too. □

Make your site searchable with your own free search engine at www.atomz.com

PROVEN WAYS TO ATTRACT MORE VISITORS



YOUR SITE CAN'T become popular and 'sticky' unless Web visitors know about – so make sure you get listed in as many search engines as possible. The quickest and easiest way is to use an automated submission service.

There are several good free services to consider. Add-URL (**www.add-url.com**) offers submission to 100 search engines and I Need Hits (**www.ineedhits.com/add-it/free**) gets you added to 40 search engines and directories.

Many submission services let you select which search engines and directories you want to be entered into – don't choose those which already list you, or you run the risk of being removed and 'black listed', then never added.

You'll need to provide your site's name, a description, the Web address, keywords, the site language, category and your name and email address. Please note that you should not provide your mail email address because you will receive confirmation emails and also advertising messages from the submission service and the directories and search engines where your site has been submitted. You have been warned!

Patience is a virtue

Bear in mind that getting your site listed in search engines and directories can be a long, drawn-out process that can take weeks or even months to come to fruition, so here's a quick and easy alternative.

To get instant attention for your pages across thousands of sites, submit your details to Free For All link sites instead. They provide lists of random sites that have been submitted to them and are usually very cluttered.

Both WorldSubmitter (**www.worldsubmitter.com**) and Links2U (**www.links2u.com**) get you listed quickly – as does the program Traffic Attractor, which was available on the free CD available with issue 49 of *Practical Internet*. Call **01454 642442** to order a back issue.

Remember that you shouldn't opt for Free For All link sites instead of search engines – use them as an extra to try and get more hits.

Whatever your passion -express yourself on-line

WebPack4home
Make the net work for you

Added Value
- ✔ Easy step by step webdesign software
- ✔ Multiple search engine registration
- ✔ Guest books
- ✔ Own forums
- ✔ Useful site statistics
- ✔ Easy site maintenance

100 mb web space
50 email accounts
200 forwarding addresses
3,000 mb data transfer monthly
unlimited FTP access
Standard CGI's
Full Graphical Site Statistics
Online control panel

Free Software worth £400 included!

£2.99 per month + VAT*

*plus one-off set up fee £9.99 + VAT

Reserve your domain name before someone else does!

.co.uk/.org.uk	.com/.net/.org
£0.00 per month (You just pay the standard annual nominet fee of £2.50 + VAT)	£0.00 per month (You just pay the standard annual database fee of £10 + VAT)
.biz	**.info**
£0.00 per month (You just pay the standard annual database fee of £10 + VAT)	£0.00 per month (You just pay the standard annual database fee of £10 + VAT)

- ✔ free web-/email forwarding
- ✔ free domain transfer

THE PRESS AGREES...

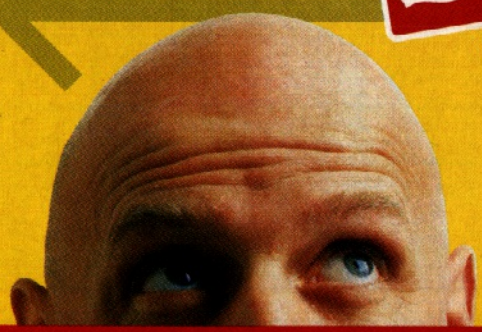
PC HOME

"The 1&1 Group is one of the world's largest, highest performing, and most reliable Web hosting providers. They currently service over one million domains in the UK, Germany and France. 1&1 offer free technical support to resolve problems effectively and all inquiries are handled by email support on an individual basis. More than 20 highly qualified staff members answer your email inquiries daily."

"A handy mixed bag of web hosting, domain name registration, and software for building a website...the software is valuable and the onestop solution should make life a lot easier."

Webuser

Performance ★★★★★



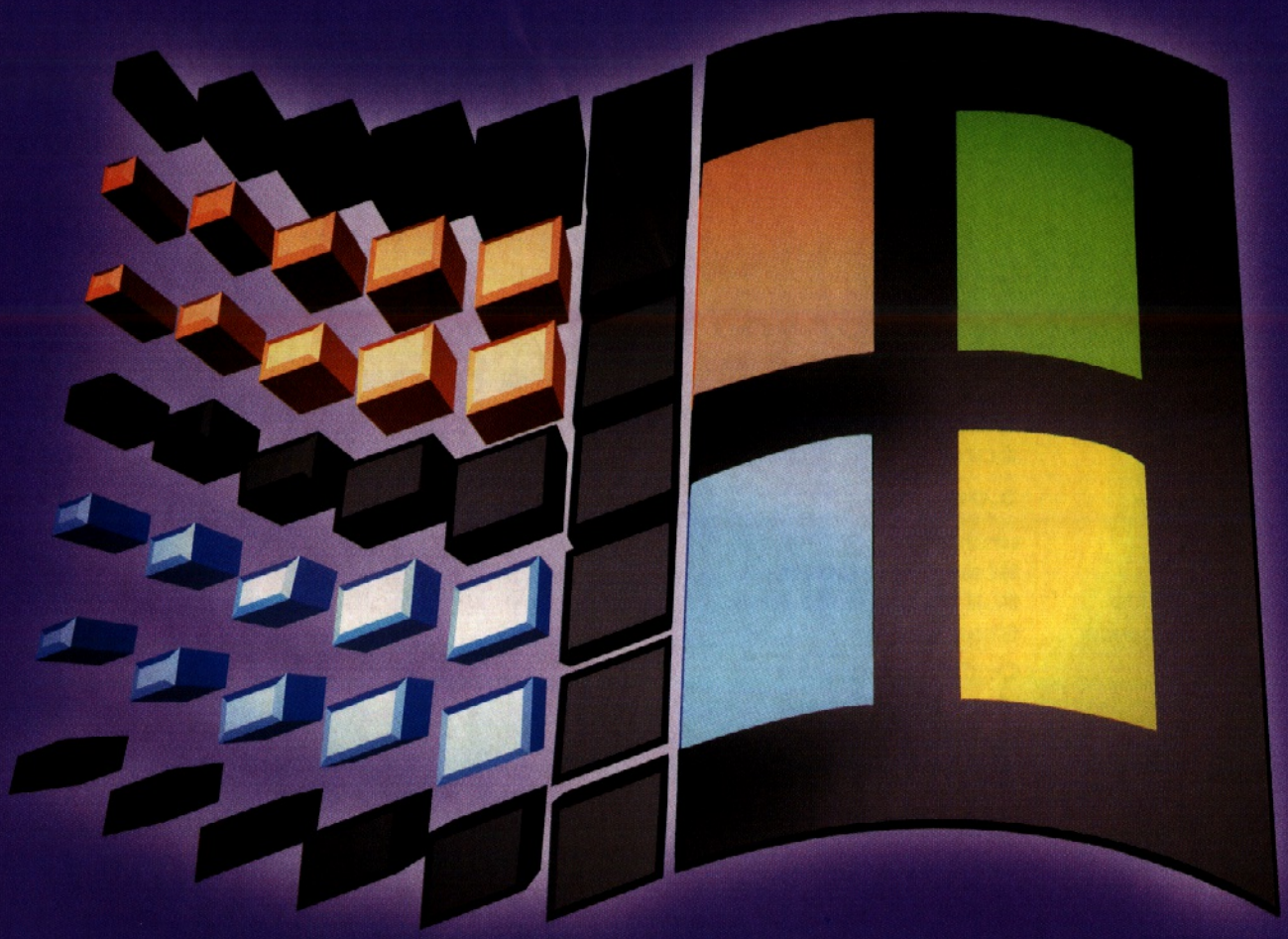
DON'T WASTE ANY MORE TIME
VISIT US TODAY
www.oneandone.co.uk

FIRST CHOICE FOR

DOMAINS... AND COUNTING

OneAndOne.co.uk

1&1



WINDOWS INTERNET SECRETS

UNLOCK WINDOWS' HIDDEN POWER TO SQUEEZE EXTRA SPEED FROM YOUR PC. **THOMAS WATSON** SHOWS YOU HOW

The road to Internet contentment is a long and winding one, with more fixes, gadgets and gizmos available than even the biggest cyber geek could ever hope to use. The uninitiated can all too easily be convinced that enlightenment only follows from installing yet more bloated software onto their already creaking hard drive.

Unless you're a glutton for punishment or some kind of Start Menu masochist, then you don't actually need to take that tired route to add all manner of pizzazz and tweaks to your computer. For, unbeknownst to the majority of PC users, Windows contains a number of hidden doorways to a faster and more efficient operating system. And as anyone who's been PC literate for any length of time will know, a faster operating system makes for a faster Internet experience. Kind souls that we are, we wouldn't want you Mac users out there feeling left out either, so you'll find a handy section on squeezing every ounce of goodness out of your Mac's Internet connection.

So you've finally discarded the gamut of dodgy software promising to give you untold wealth and happiness. The trick now is to make Windows work for you, by tuning into some of the secret settings that can transform your PC from a bumbling carthorse into the nippiest of thoroughbreds in no time at all.

Browser tweaks

Before you start delving into Registry entries with all the passion you can muster, it's first worth ensuring that you have the basics tied up. The amount of people who go rampaging into the most complicated sections of their PC without tying up the simplest of loose ends first is staggering. And although we're not talking about simplistic tasks such as organising Favorites, these basic tweaks don't require a staggering base of knowledge.

With increased Internet speed being our goal, it makes sense to have a quick fiddle around with the settings in Internet Explorer, or whatever browser you currently use. Yes, you heard right – how often have you Netscape fanatics reached this far in an article, only to discover that only IE freaks need apply. Because we're not tinkering with the specifics of IE, you can apply these changes to the browser of your choice.

First up, it makes sense to empty the cache as often as possible. Known as the Temporary Internet Files folder in Internet Explorer, and accessible by clicking 'Tools' then 'Options', this is the files downloaded by your browser on your travels. These files, essential to view the site's graphical elements, are stored by Windows so that, next time you visit the site, it will load quicker. Unless you visit the same non-changing sites every day of your life, this is a more or less redundant concept. Most of the world only make regular stops to sites that have regular updates, meaning that the cache is only used for logos and the like. While this might save you a tiny fraction of time, you have to balance this up against having 200Mb of gunk cluttering up your Windows folder.

The History is another good idea which can quickly turn into an overworked nightmare. Like the cache, it's designed to make visiting sites a more nippy experience, but again ends up doing nothing more than clogging up the resources it's supposed to be protecting. Empty this as often as you can, for a fitter, happier, more productive browser.

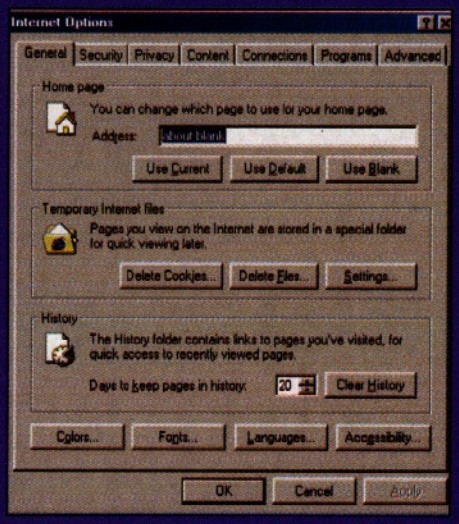
Clean your windows

So, having streamlined your browser with a couple of dead easy tweaks, the time is set for some advanced manoeuvres. But we're still leaving PC modem and Internet settings well alone, for we can muster a massive boost in performance with some top notch Windows alterations.

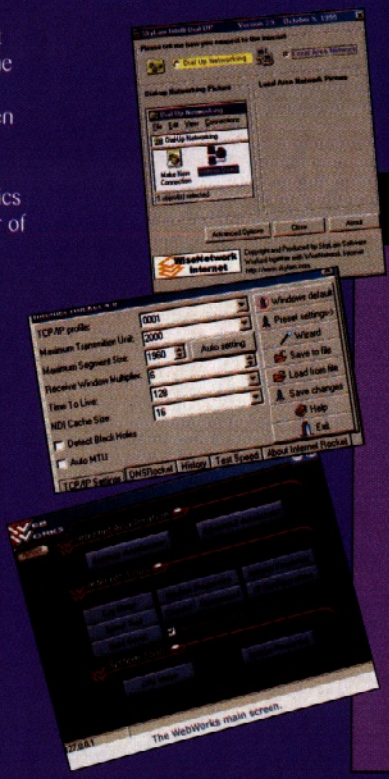
For anyone in a hurry, the most irritating of all PC niggles is the time you have to wait for your dream machine to boot up. A quick and easy way to shave seconds off this dead time is to enter 'msconfig' in the 'Run' dialog box, available by clicking on 'Start' then 'Run'. Here, you can decide exactly which programs should start up automatically, and appear in the system tray. Each of these adds a good few seconds to your booting up time, so be as ruthless as possible. A quick reboot later, and you'll notice a far more speed-friendly opening.

Once your computer is up and running, the major bugbear of the average user is Virtual Memory, although many of you won't have realised it. This is the process where your hard drive takes over when you run out of RAM, and is vital to ensure that your machine doesn't collapse and die all the time. The problem with this is a common one, and it's that the Virtual Memory is incorrectly set up for all but

A FASTER OPERATING SYSTEM MAKES FOR A FASTER INTERNET EXPERIENCE



Clearing out your History folder regularly is a good way to ensure your connection runs more smoothly



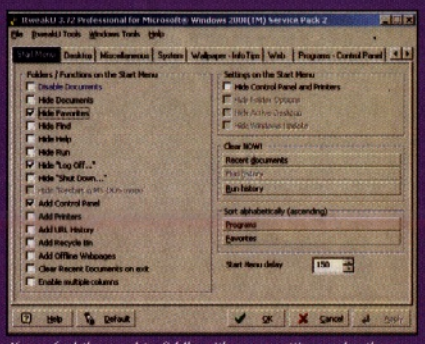
The WebWorks main screen.

MORE SPEED IN SECONDS...

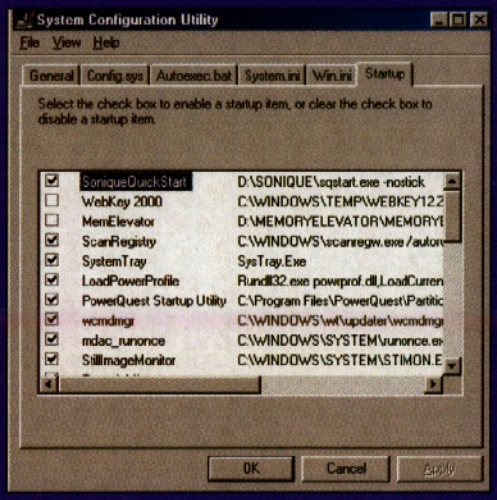
IF YOU DON'T mind adding more software onto your computer, there's a vast selection available to try and speed up your connection. A quick trip to download.com shows you hundreds of programs specially designed to provide you with a zippier connection. Three of our favourites are WebWorks, Intelli-Dial-Up and Internet Rocket. The first (available at www.ndksolutions.com) allows you to change Registry settings to beef up your modem, and all in a user-friendly interface. Intelli-Dial Up (www.skylam.com) lets you alter the MTU settings to work far more respectably with your modem than before. Finally, Internet Rocket (www.roadside-software.com) boasts the most detailed range of features of our three, and promises to do the most to bring your connection kicking and screaming into this century.

HIDDEN TWEAKS THAT ADD MORE POWER TO YOUR PC

Just in case you ever doubted that there was a booty of hidden tweaks and fixes hiding under the Windows facade, take a look at TweakUI.. Developed by the actual Windows team under the guise 'Power Toys', TweakUI is a tiny program which gives you access to the features that Microsoft weren't too keen on. With this in tow, you can change menus and appearances, as well as mess around with RAM allocation and CPU usage until the cows come home. Although it was developed by Microsoft, it's not supported by it, so don't expect a refund if it jiggers up your copy of Windows 98. You can grab it from www.download.com.



If you feel the need to fiddle with every setting under the sun, have a play around with TweakUI



Waiting around for your PC to start up and kick into action is always annoying. Cut down on your auto starts and you will shave off seconds

GIVE ME MORE SPEED!

If you really want to start showing Windows who's boss, then this is what you should be doing. One for the advanced user only, you can set up a temporary drive entirely using RAM to store the cache while you browse.

This saves your PC having to continually call upon the hard drive for reference, and instead goes direct to the RAM, which is just about the quickest route possible.

Unfortunately, it means you're going to lose the cache every time you shut down, but the speed difference should make up for this. Oh, and it involves a whole load of Registry fiddling, so go easy on this one. We found a great description at www.windrivers.com.

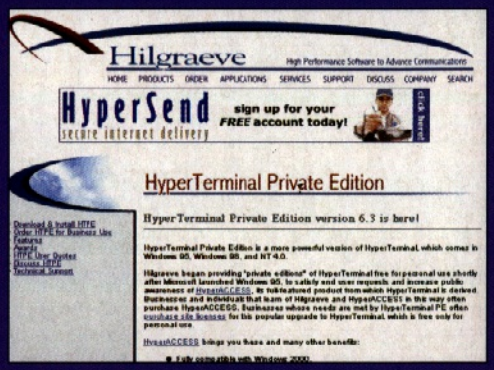
the privileged few. If your hard drive is partitioned, you're in particular trouble. Virtual Memory is automatically set to work with the drive where Windows is installed – so if this isn't the biggest or fastest of your partitions, you're looking at slow progress indeed. Take a look at our walkthrough on updating the Virtual Memory settings to work for you.

While we're at it, it makes sense to add a bit of oomph to your hard drive as well. Right-click on 'My Computer', and choose 'Properties'. Go into the 'Device Manager' and then choose your hard drive from the 'Disk drives' sub menu. After clicking on 'Settings', tick the 'DMA' box. This provides you with Direct Memory Access. While this sounds quite technical, all it means is that the route from PC to hard drive is a shorter, and therefore quicker one. Some older PCs don't support DMA, but the damage done in selecting it is minimal, with a Windows crash and a less happy Registry your only problems.

MODEM MAGIC

Now, finally, we get to the real nitty gritty of the matter. To turn your ailing PC into a born again browsing winner, there are a host of tasty settings for you to alter and fiddle around with. Did you know, for example, that you can radically improve the speed of your modem with just a couple of quick changes?

The key to this, and this won't surprise you one iota after what's gone before, is that Windows is set up by default to work with network connections, and not modems. You might wonder why this is, considering that the vast majority of punters with Windows connect to the Net via the humble dial-up



*There are plenty of programs to maximise your modem. One of the best is HyperTerminal from **www.hilgraeve.com/htpe/index.html***

modem, and you wouldn't be the first to doubt the folly of Microsoft's decision. It's been like this since the dawn of Windows 95, so the cynical out there might wonder why such an erroneous error has yet to be corrected. Also, did you know that Windows 98 takes it for granted that you're using a 14.4Kb modem? Why? Again, because Microsoft hadn't updated the settings since Windows 95 appeared on the scene.

Thankfully, adjusting Windows to work in the correct way doesn't take too much effort, and it's much more a case of knowing where to look. For your delectation, we've included a step by step guide to getting the best from your modem below, so you should be well on your way to a speedier Internet experience.

But speed is nothing without some form of consistency. There simply is no point in connecting at supersonic speeds, only to find yourself confusingly kicked off every ten minutes. Worry not, though, for there are a couple of tricks you can store up your sleeve to help maintain your Internet connection.

Working in a similar way to TweakUI, HyperTerminal is a small file you can download which will open up a world of modem fixing tools, previously stored yet hidden in Windows.

TO VASTLY INCREASE THE QUALITY OF YOUR BROWSING LIFE, DOWNLOAD THE LATEST DRIVERS FOR YOUR MODEM

www.9netave.uk.net

DEDICATED WINDOWS2000 / LINUX SERVERS

- Option of NO contract, NO commitment
- From £44.95pm (*with 36m contract)
- High speed, high connectivity UK datacentre
- Service Level Agreement with 99.5% uptime guarantee

from £45 per month* or £539 per annum

from £65 per month* or £779 per annum

from £99 per month* or £999 per annum

*Prices based on a 36 month contract.

- Free Phone 24/7 Technical Support
- 30 day money-back guarantee
- UK or US Datacentres
- Park Your Domain FREE
- Barclays EPDQ Hosting Partner
- e-Commerce solutions from £19.95/mo.

With 9Net's **UNIQUE NO contract / NO commitment** option, you only pay the set-up fee and the hosting fee on a monthly basis. You may cancel anytime with NO penalty!

Plans	Cobalt RaQ4	Cobalt RaQ4
Prices	£99 per month	£149 per month
Set Up Fee	£149 one time	£149 one time
Hard Drive	20 Gb	20 Gb
DRAM	128 MB	256 MB
Transfer limit	5 Gb	15 Gb

Plans	Cobalt RaQ4 r	Cobalt RaQ4 r
Prices	£199 per month	£249 per month
Set Up Fee	£149 one time	£149 one time
Hard Drive	2 x 20 Gb	2 x 30 Gb
DRAM	256 MB	512 MB
Transfer limit	15 Gb	15 Gb

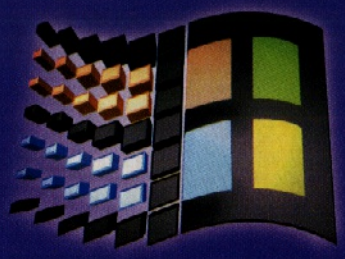
Plan Options	Dedicated Home	Dedicated Office	Dedicated Pro	Dedicated Enterprise Plus
Monthly Fees	£69	£99	£199	£499
Set Up	£149	£199	£249	£399
Processor	Celeron 633	Celeron 733	Pentium III 800	Pentium III 800 Dual
Memory	64 Mb SDRAM	128Mb SDRAM	256 Mb SDRAM	512 Mb SDRAM
Hard Drive	20 Gb IDE	20 Gb IDE	40 Gb IDE or 9.1 Gb SCSI U2W	2 x 9.1 Gb SCSI U2W & 1 x 18 Gb
Raid	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Back Up	Customer	Customer	Customer	Tape* 30 Gb
Transfer limit	5 Gb	10 Gb	15 Gb	50 Gb
IPs	1	1	1	1
Operating System	Linux Free BSD	Linux Free BSD	NT/WIN2K Linux Free BSD	NT/WIN2K Linux Free BSD

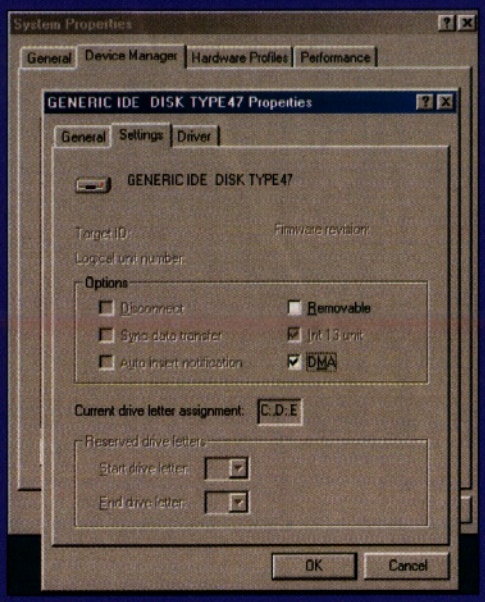
COBALT TrueBlue Sapphire PARTNER

9NETAVENUE™

ePDQ

FREE PHONE **0800 328 9450**





Add a bit of oomph to your hard drive by altering the Direct Memory Access (DMA) settings as shown here

YOU SHOULD NEVER TAKE ANY WINDOWS DEFAULT SETTINGS YOU COME UP AGAINST AS GOSPEL

You can pick up a copy of HyperTerminal at **www.hilgraeve.com/htpe/index.html**. Again, this is pretty high end stuff, but you can make impressive changes in no time, once you've learned to find your way around.

Designated driver

Another really simple way to vastly increase the quality of your browsing life is to download the latest drivers for your modem. Check your modem make and model number, and download the latest drivers

You can tune up your applications so that they start faster by using Windows settings

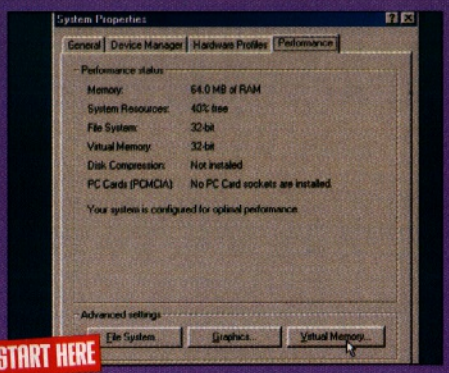
(INF files) from the manufacturer Web site. Once you've done this, just go into the 'Device manager' control panel, choose modem, and opt to 'Update drivers' for this device. You can then install these newly downloaded information files (drivers) from the location you've saved them to, and get set for a faster modem.

For those of you who are still bravely labouring on with less than 64Mb of RAM, Windows 98 has a handy built-in tool to speed up the loading of programs. Known as 'WinAlign', you can find it by going to 'C:\Windows\System', and double-clicking on the 'Walign' file. Using all manner of mathematics, WinAlign manages to jiggle about the RAM on your PC to ensure that programs open up in less time.

So, with our top tips and admirable advice in tow, you need never be frustrated with the stupidly sluggish speed of your computer and its connection. And just remember at all times that you should never take any Windows default settings you come up against as gospel. Most things can be tweaked so you get the best connection possible. ■

SQUEEZE MORE SPEED FROM YOUR SYSTEM

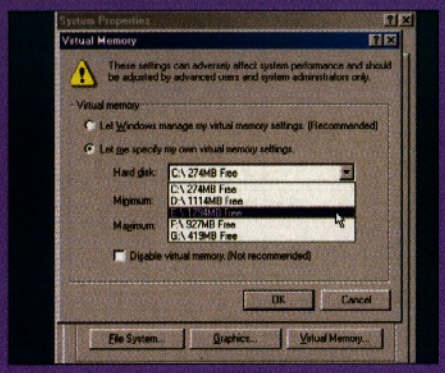
THE DEFAULT SETTINGS FOR THE VIRTUAL MEMORY IN WINDOWS CAN LEAVE SOMETHING TO BE DESIRED AS FAR AS SPEED IS CONCERNED. A FEW MINUTES SPENT IN THIS DEPARTMENT COULD MAKE A MONUMENTAL DIFFERENCE NOT ONLY TO YOUR BROWSING, BUT TO YOUR WHOLE WINDOWS LIFE



START HERE

1 Finding the settings

Right-click on the 'My computer' icon on your desktop and choose 'Properties', which brings up the 'System' properties box. Click on the 'Performance' tab on the right, then the 'Virtual memory' button at the bottom.



2 Specify your own settings

Tick the 'Specify my own settings' box, which allows you to choose which hard drive to work from. If your hard drive isn't partitioned, don't worry about this. Otherwise, choose the partition with the most free space.

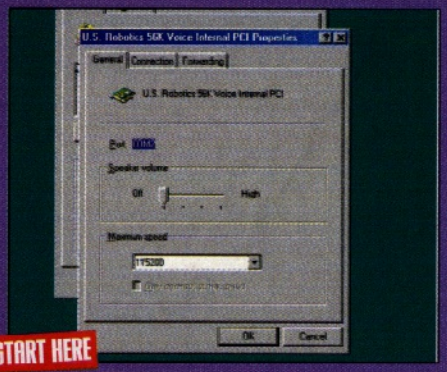
FINISH HERE

3 Set RAM values

Set the maximum and minimum to 2.5 times the amount of RAM you have. So, if you have 64Mb like us, enter 160Mb in both fields. Click on 'OK', then the 'Yes' button to confirm. Restart your machine, and you should have a faster system.

FOUR QUICK AND EASY STEPS TO GET MORE FROM YOUR MODEM

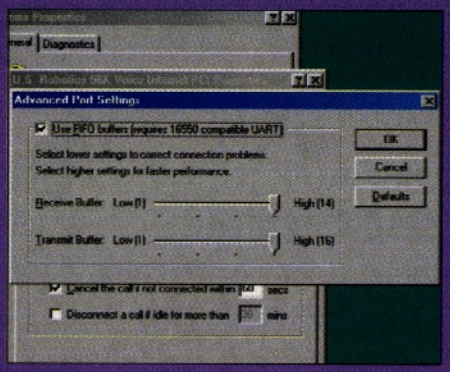
YOU CAN INSTALL all the download accelerators you want in an effort to improve your connection, but you're still skirting around the real issue. You can't connect to the Internet without a modem, so it makes sense to divert your attention to the modem when you're looking at improving your connection to the Internet. Apply these four remarkably simple steps for a massive modem performance boost. You'll be thankful you did.



START HERE

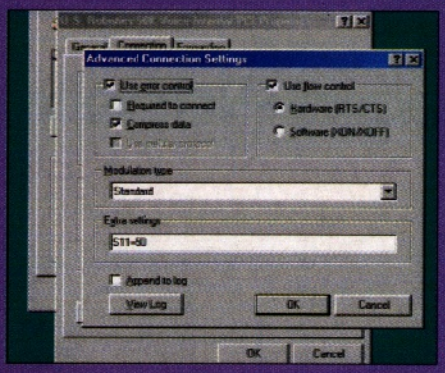
1 Set the speed limit

Open the Control Panel, then double-click on the 'Modem' icon to open the modem properties. First up, ensure that the maximum speed is set to 115200 if you have a 56K modem, as this speed limit will push up the general flow of your modem.



2 Full buffers

Now click on the 'Connection' tab, then the 'Port settings' tab. You'll see two sliders which let you set the buffer level for your modem. As the label says, choose a higher setting for a faster modem, so set both sliders to maximum.



3 Faster dialling

This is one of the techie tips that gives you that extra oomph. Go to Properties, 'Connection' then 'Advanced'. In the 'Extra settings' text box, enter the legend 'S11=50'. This reduces the dial tone from 100 milliseconds to 50.

FINISH HERE

4 Faster connection

If you find that you have to wait ages after dialling to connect properly, you need to do the following. Go to 'Server Types', and uncheck the 'Log on to network' boxes. This will give you instant connection after the dial-up procedure is completed.

SOFTWARE DOWNLOADS

Net Sonic
www.netsonic.com
NetSonic accelerates your Internet browsing by loading previously visited Web pages quickly. NetSonic's 'SonicCache' technology stores your favourite Web pages in its cache.

Webcelerator
www.webcelerator.com
Webcelerator can recover from lost connections, computer shutdowns and other errors. It integrates fully into Netscape and Internet Explorer to give you more speed.

GET MAXIMUM PERFORMANCE FROM YOUR MAC

ALL OF YOU Mac aficionados out there should rejoice, for the reams of tips and tweaks you've just seen for Windows don't apply to you. That's because Macs are designed with a watertight system to get you online with the minimum of fuss, and at the highest speed possible. So, unless you're into OS programming, you'll find that you can't make dramatic changes to the way your Mac connects to the Net. One way of ensuring that your browser always performs at the peak of its powers is to assign more RAM to it. Experienced users will know that this only involves an Apple + I keypress on the program icon, then changing the RAM information to a more suitable size. Apart from that, you're left with the standard issues of downloading accelerators, or the odd modem script to speed it up somewhat. Once you've done that, the most simple of tips applies, with ideas such as turning off graphics, and using a download manager the best way to boost speed. More than anything, you should just think yourselves lucky that you're not using a PC.

MAGICMOMENTS

Our business is to serve you

Host Europe

Part of the Host Europe Group

Hosting Packages

Business Reseller Home User

enquiries@magic-moments.com

order online:www.magic-moments.com

Freephone

0800 100 6200

Magic Business Package £199PA

Magic Business E-Commerce £499PA

with Miva Merchant

Reseller

Business

Magic Reseller Package £500PA

or £50 per month

All Packages

- Multiple Internet Connections
- Virtual Control Panel 2001
- Unlimited E-mail Forwarding
- Unlimited Mailing Lists
- Unlimited Autoresponders
- Perl, CGI, ASP, Miva, PHP and MySQL
- FTP, SSH, RealAudio and MP3
- Graphical Usage Statistics

Magic Business Only

- 100MB Web Space
- Your Own Domain Name Including All Fees
- 100 POP3 E-mail boxes
- 3GB Bandwidth per Month
- Free use of Secure Server
- Free Microsoft FrontPage Extensions

State of the art Data Centre

Our state of the art data centres are located within our facilities in London and Nottingham. They house our network of over 1500 servers.

Virtual Control Panel 2001

The Virtual Control Panel 2001 allows you to automatically control your web site without any knowledge of programming!

Magic Business E-commerce Only

- All the Features of the Magic Business
- Miva Merchant Easy and Fast to use Shopping Cart and E-commerce Solution
- Try our Demo On-line

24/7 Technical Support

All Magic Moments hosting packages come complete with 24/7/365 phone and e-mail technical support.

Magic Reseller Only

- 2 GB Web Space and 2000 POP3 E-mail Boxes to Share Between Your Customers
- 3 GB Bandwidth Per Month per Domain
- 2 Virtual Servers Free of Charge
- Additional Virtual Servers £25

Home User

If you want to use the power of the internet to break down your own communication barriers, talk to Magic Moments. Whether you are planning a simple web site or an e-commerce enabled on-line application, our friendly and knowledgeable sales team will provide a solution that is absolutely right for you. And that's not all. Our after sales service is second to none, solving any problems you may encounter.

Prices exclude VAT @ 17.5%

Networkshop

THE HANDS-ON SECTION OF PRACTICAL INTERNET HELPS YOU USE THE WEB'S BEST SOFTWARE AND ONLINE SERVICES TO GET EVEN MORE FROM YOUR NET CONNECTION

In this section:

VIRUSES ARE ALWAYS a worry for PC users – you're never quite sure what you may be downloading when you go online. If you think you may have inadvertently done some damage to your machine, give Symantec Security Check a try. We show you how to use this online service to identify and fix any problems.

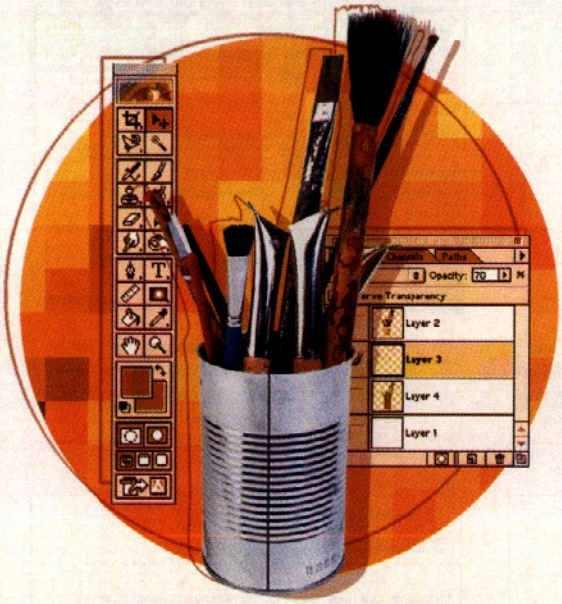
Sometimes you may have to work from different machines, but not have the equipment to transfer files between them. However, using a rather nifty service from Visto.com, you can upload all sorts of files to the Web, which you can open from any other machine you're using.

We all want to make our Web sites look the best they can. One simple and effective way of adding a professional touch to your site is to create a logo for it. We show you how to do this using Satori PhotoXL, which you'll find on our cover CD.

If you read our feature on pages 42-46 on making your site sticky, you may remember we mentioned bulletin boards. On page 70, we show you how to add this interactive element to your site, and even how to include a chat room.

This issue's HTML tutorial has a look at how you can use JavaScript to create different browser windows, alert boxes and dialog boxes every time someone visits your site. This will ensure that your site remains fresh each time someone visits it.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
WebFusion
Seriously Easy Web Hosting
CONTACT SALES ON 0115 917 0000
OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK



To add a professional touch to your site, you should think about creating a logo. We show you how to do exactly that with Satori PhotoXL, on this issue's CD

If you tire of using Netscape or Internet Explorer as your browser, give Opera a go. You can even customise it, as we show you here

Continuing our series of Flash tutorials, this issue we take a look at creating drop menus in Flash 5. They're easy to do and will aid navigation no end

Tutorials

PROJECT 1 TUTORIAL
Track down PC viruses 56
Scan your PC for viruses online

PROJECT 2 TUTORIAL
Create an online desktop 58
Organise your information online

PROJECT 3 TUTORIAL
Organise your MP3s 60
Make sure your MP3s are easy to find

PROJECT 4 TUTORIAL
Create a logo for your site 62
Turn your site heading into something special

PROJECT 5 TUTORIAL
Build your own browser 66
Create a customised version of Opera

PROJECT 6 TUTORIAL
Master your address book 68
Send multiple emails easily

PROJECT 7 TUTORIAL
Create a Favicon for your site 69
Icons that show in your visitor's Favorites

PROJECT 8 TUTORIAL
Online bulletin boards 70
Adding a board to your site

PROJECT 9 TUTORIAL
Easy menus in Flash 72
Create simple animated drop down menus

PROJECT 10 TUTORIAL
Pop-up windows in HTML 74
Use JavaScript to create pop-ups

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
WebFusion
CONTACT SALES ON 0115 917 0000
OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK

Give your PC a free virus check-up

PROJECT 1
TUTORIAL

How to: Scan your PC for viruses using the free, Web-based Symantec Security Check service

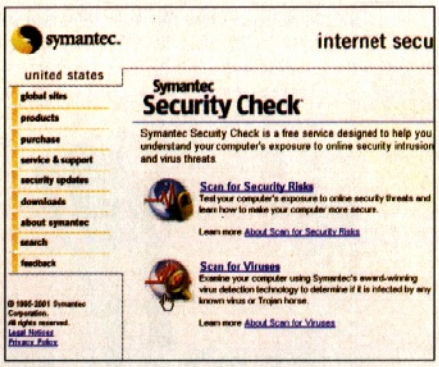
THE NET HAS a nasty habit of allowing all manner of bugs and viruses to crawl onto your PC. Whether it's through email attachments, MP3s or other downloaded files, the threat is always there. Of course, most of these are harmless enough and will not cause any significant damage to your machine. However, you never know when a hard-drive wrecking beast may strike.

Instead of buying and installing virus detection software, you can now track down these nasties using the Symantec Security Check.

This free online service will not only analyse your computer for potential security risks, but it can also sniff out any viruses that may be hanging around. Once the Virus Check has scanned your files and system memory, Symantec will suggest ways of irradiating any viruses it may have found, and you can even download virus removal tools from the site.

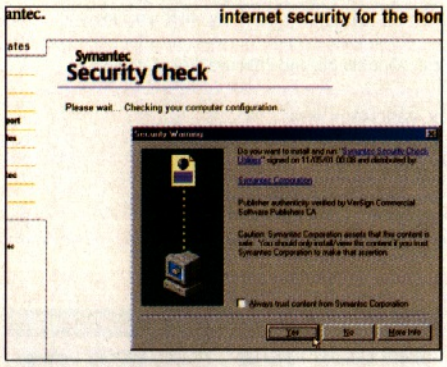
1 Access the site

Go to the Symantec Web site at **www.symantec.com** and click on the 'Symantec Security Check' link. This will take you to the company's Net security zone where you'll need to choose the 'Find out today if you are safe' option to start the ball rolling.



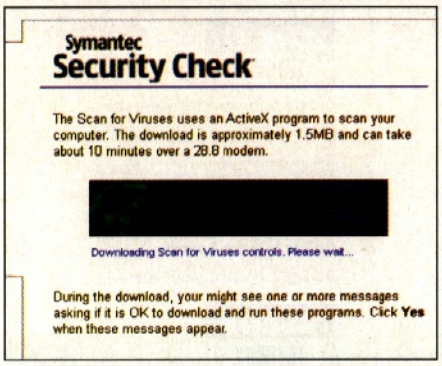
2 Scanning for viruses

Next, you're given two Security Check options to choose from. The first option is to scan your machine for online security risks and learn how to deal with these. For now though, we're concentrating on weeding out viruses, so click on 'Scan for Viruses'.



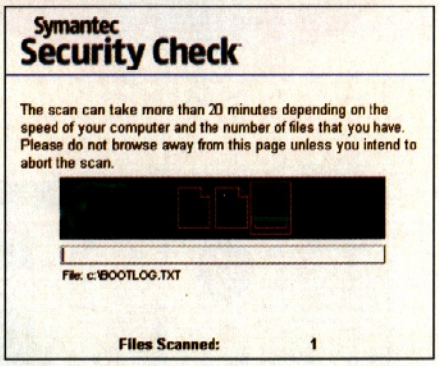
3 Installing utilities

Symantec will check your PC's configuration. In order for it to scan your files you'll need to install and run the Security Check Utilities by clicking 'Yes' when prompted. Once the utilities program has been installed you'll be taken to the ActiveX download.



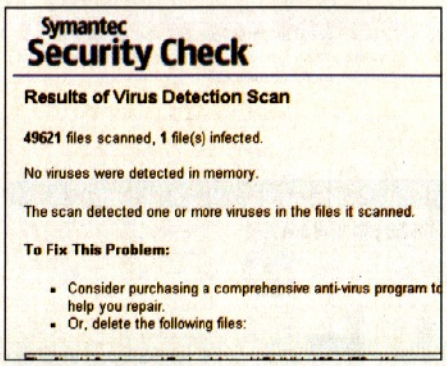
4 Download scanning program

The ActiveX program is needed to read the files and check whether they contain virus or trojan material. During the 1.5Mb download you need to agree to the messages asking if it is OK to download and run certain programs. Click 'Yes' when these messages appear.



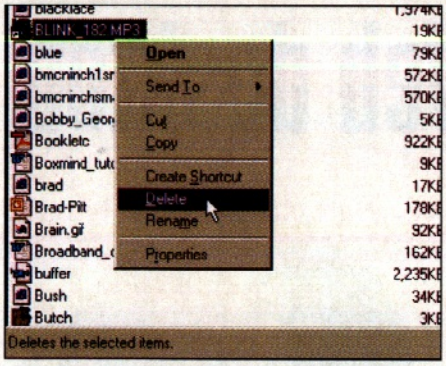
5 Starting the scan

Symantec will now start scanning all of the files on your PC. This can take anything up to 20 minutes depending on how many files and applications you have stored on your hard drive. Click on 'Stop Scan' at any time to abort the procedure.



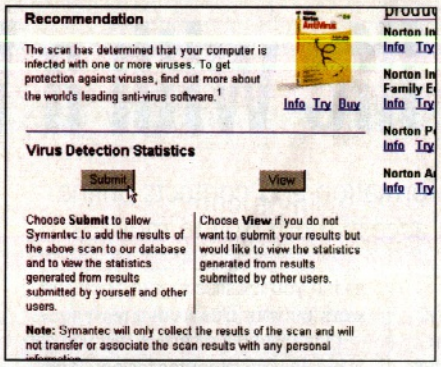
6 The results

Once the scan has finished, you'll be told the total number of files that were scanned along with the details of any that were found to be infected, including the type of virus detected. In this case, one of our files was infected and Symantec recommends that we delete the file.



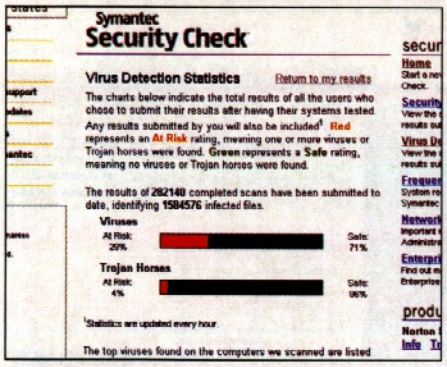
7 Removing infected files

Locate the directory of infected files using the path you are given. This is done by double-clicking on 'My Computer'. As our file is just an MP3 in the attachments folder of our email program it's safe to delete, so right-click on the filename and chose 'Delete'.



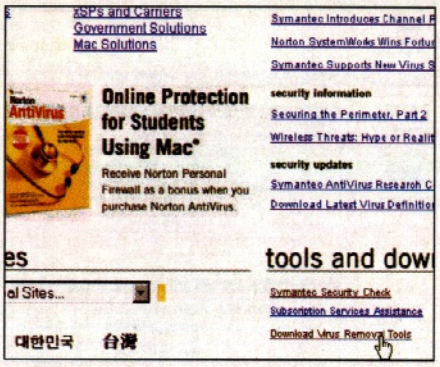
8 Submitting your stats

Go back to the browser window and scroll down. You can submit your virus information to the Symantec database. Choose 'Submit' to add your data and view the results submitted by other users of the service. If you don't want to do this, simply click 'View'.



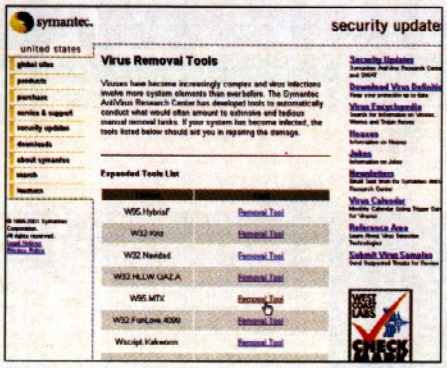
9 Viewing virus stats

Here you'll see the virus statistics based on users who have submitted their results. The charts indicate how 'Safe' they are, whether or not any viruses were found. You can also check to see which viruses, worms and trojan horses are currently the most common.



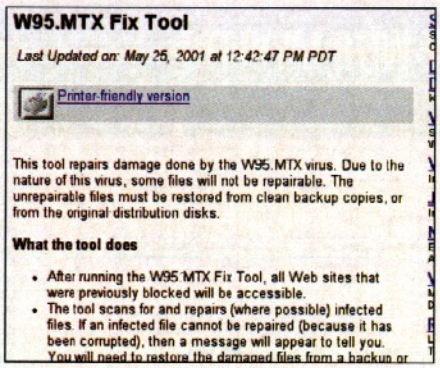
10 Virus removal tools

If the virus scan detects infected system files, it's probably a good idea not to delete them yourself. Instead, check Symantec's removal tools where you can download automatic fixes for certain viruses. Return to the home page and click on 'Download Virus Removal Tools'.



11 Choosing a tool

You'll be presented with a list of virus removal tools. Check to see if the detected virus matches any of those listed. If you've forgotten the name of the virus use the 'Back' button to return to your report. Click on the 'Removal Tool' link next to the virus.



12 Downloading your tool

Now read how to download and run the tool as this will vary. It might be a good idea to print the instructions at this point by clicking 'Print' on your browser bar. Click on the link to the download the virus removal tool from the site.

JARGON BUSTER

ActiveX
A set of technologies designed by Microsoft that enables software components to interact with each other on the Net. Malicious code can abuse existing ActiveX components such as Word's 'Clippy'. It can also be contained in any new ActiveX components that are downloaded to your machine.

Trojan horse
A seemingly useful and innocuous program that contains hidden code allowing the unauthorised modification, exploitation or destruction of data. Games, freeware and screen savers obtained from the Net are common sources of Trojan horses.

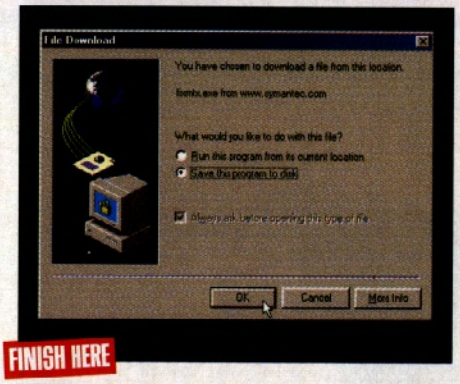
Worm
An independent program that gets its name from the way it replicates itself, crawling from machine to machine across network connections. Commonly spread through email, often clogging networks as it goes.

ONLINE RESOURCES

AV-Test
www.av-test.org
Detailed tests of various virus and trojan horse prevention software.

F-Prot
www.complex.is/f-prot/
A shareware anti-virus DOS-based program for PCs from Frisk Software.

HouseCall
www.housecall.antivirus.com/pc-housecall
Free online virus scanner from Trend Micro.



FINISH HERE

13 Remove viruses automatically

Save the tool to your desktop and restart in safe mode. Now refer back to your printed instructions on how to activate the tool by opening up a DOS window and typing a code into the command line. The tool will then automatically conduct repairs to your files.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
WebFusion
CONTACT SALES ON 0115 917 0000
OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK

Simplify your life with a Web desktop

PROJECT 2
TUTORIAL

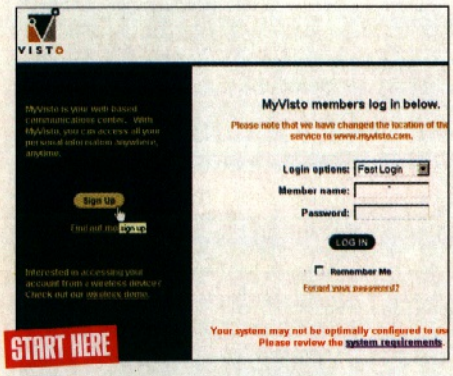
How to: Organise your information and contacts online using MyVisto so you can access them on the move...

IF YOUR PERSONAL files and documents are scattered everywhere, it's high time you had a bit of a clean up. One of the best ways of doing this is to centralise all of your important files on the Internet.

MyVisto (**www.myvisto.com**) provides an online desktop for you to organise all of your email, contacts, Bookmarks, tasks and files. You can then access any of these at the click of a mouse button from any computer, giving you the freedom to open and work on your files from anywhere.

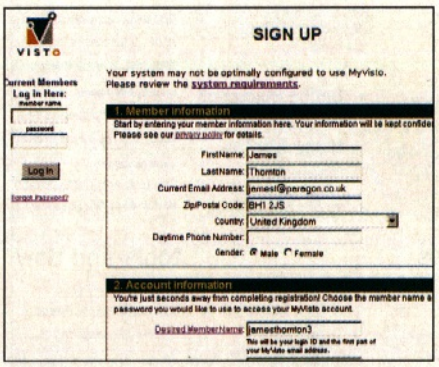
One example of this is that you can avoid staying late at the office. With MyVisto, simply upload the document to your Web account, return to your home and download it to be checked through and edited at your leisure.

Whether you want to store text documents, images or sound files, the virtual desktop lets you organise all of your files into appropriate folders



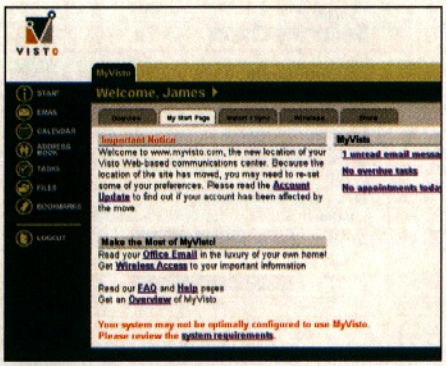
1 Register with MyVisto

Head for **www.myvisto.com**. The free service is designed for use with IE4 and above, AOL and Netscape 4.x running on Windows. While most of the features will work with other browsers and operating systems, they are not fully supported. Click 'Sign up' to proceed.



2 Entering personal details

Fill in the form, which asks for your personal details, account information and some optional stuff. The member name is needed to access your account and will form part of your MyVisto email account. Read the terms and conditions then click 'I Agree'.

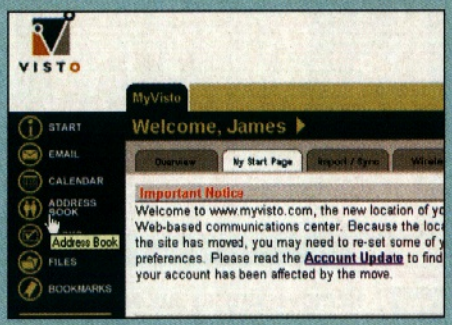


3 Confirmation of account

Your registration will now be confirmed. Click 'Continue' to move on to the Overview area of the site. Now choose the link to the 'Start Page' on the left of the screen. This is where you can control all of your account options. Click on 'Options'.

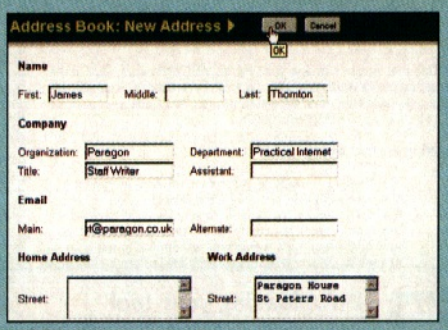
HOW TO...

MANAGE YOUR CONTACTS ONLINE WITH MYVISTO



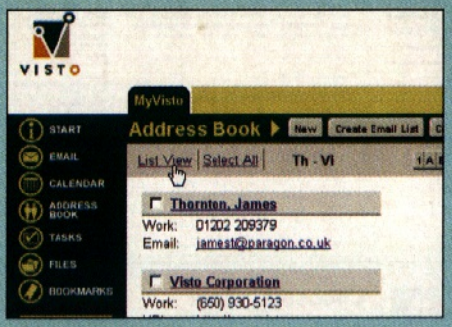
Select the address book

Another great feature of the MyVisto service is the ability to organise all of your contacts online so you can access them from anywhere. To access this facility you'll firstly need to click on the 'Address Book' from the Start page, after signing in at **www.myvisto.com**.



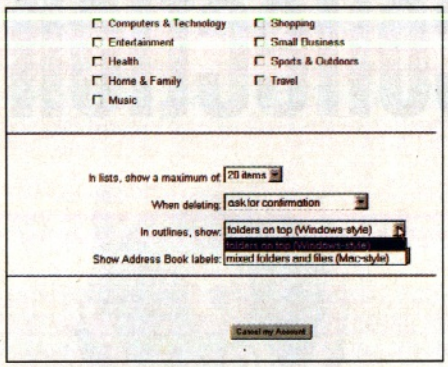
Adding a contact

This will bring up your current list of contacts, which will only contain the Visto.com address at the moment. To add someone else, click on the 'New' tab at the top of the screen. Type in all of your contact's details. Don't worry if you don't know everything as this is not necessary.



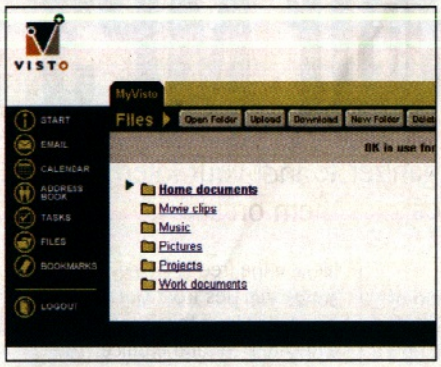
Viewing contacts

After clicking 'OK', you will see that the contact has been added to the address book. Your contacts can be viewed either as a list running down the page, or as separate cards across the page. To change your view, select 'Card' or 'List' View in your Address Book.



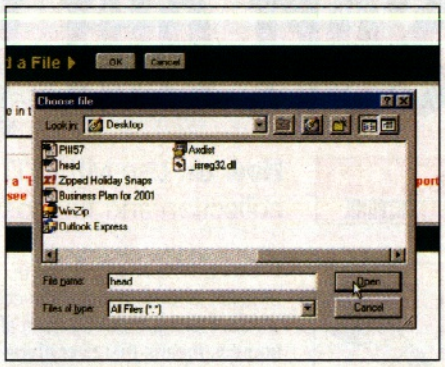
4 File viewing options

Now to start setting up the online desktop. Highlight the 'Account Info' tab at the top of the screen. Scroll down to 'Customizing Your View' and click the 'Outlines' menu to pick between viewing files and folders in a Windows style or Mac style, and click 'OK'.



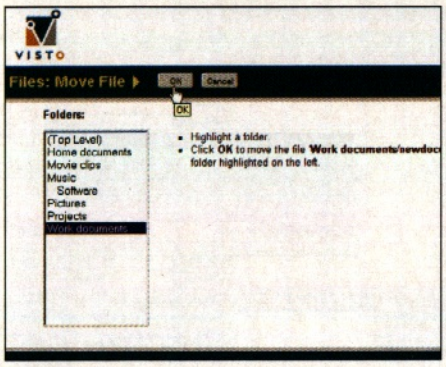
5 Setting up folders

Before you start uploading files, it's best to set up folders to keep everything organised. Click on 'Files' from the start menu to enter the desktop. Click 'Add New Folder' and enter the name of the folder. To change the name of any of your folders select the 'Rename' tab.



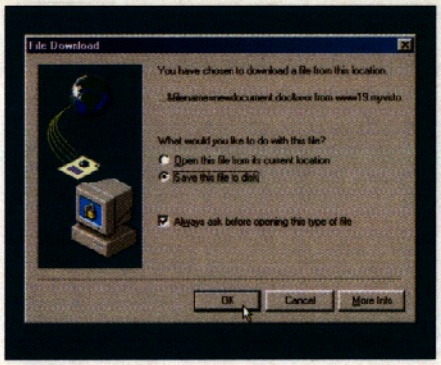
6 Upload a file

From the 'Files' page select 'Upload' from the tab menu at the top. Next click on 'Browse' to locate the file on your hard drive. Click 'Open' then OK this to upload the file. The file will appear in one of the folders on your MyVisto account. This can always be moved later.



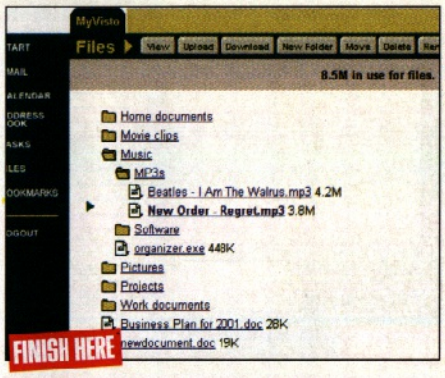
7 Organising the files

Now we'll change the name of our file and move it into an appropriate folder. Select the file, click 'Rename' and then enter a name. Click on 'OK'. Now you can move it by clicking the filename and selecting 'Move'. Select the desired folder and click 'OK'.



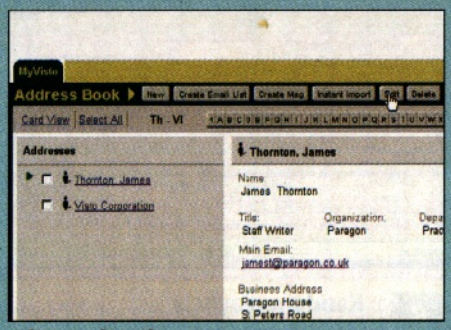
8 Viewing your files

You can open your files by selecting the folder and clicking on the filename. To save this file to any machine you are working on click the 'Download' tab, choosing 'Save this file to disk'. Now decide where you want to save the file and click 'Open' to download it.



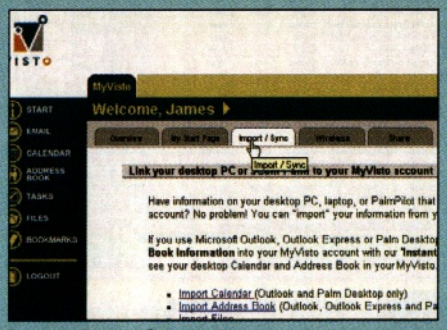
9 Your online desktop

The desktop is now complete and if you selected the Windows style view, it should look something like this. You can easily see the size of each file next to its name. You can use up to 15Mb of space, and to check this, go to 'Options' and click 'Storage Use'.



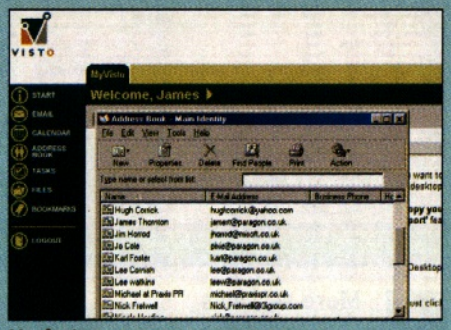
Editing details

If any of your friends or family's details change, you can always edit their information. To select the address you want, click on the contact's name, or in the checkbox next to it then choose 'Edit'. Type in the new details, click on 'OK' and the information will be updated.



Importing information

If you already have your own list of contacts in Microsoft Outlook, Outlook Express or on a Palm Desktop, you can transfer this to your MyVisto account by downloading the Instant Import tool using the 'Import/Sync' option from the Start page and following the installation instructions.



Updating your contacts

From the Import Addresses dialog box, select the folder that holds your information. Click 'Browse' to locate where the address book is kept. Now choose whether to 'Replace' all your MyVisto contacts or combine them with those from Outlook. Click 'OK' to import the information.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
WebFusion
CONTACT SALES ON 0115 917 0000
OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK

Sort out your MP3 collection

PROJECT 3
TUTORIAL

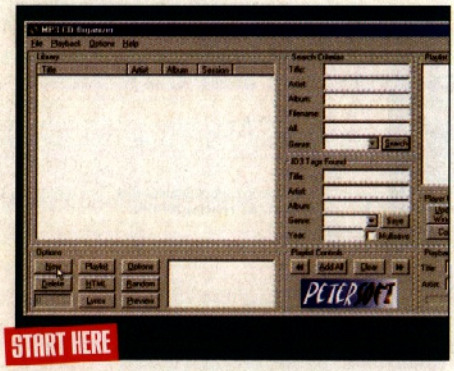
How to: Use MP3 CD Organizer to sort your Internet music collection and find lost files

You can install a copy of MP3 CD Organizer from this month's cover CD

IT'S ALL TOO easy to build up an ungainly and unmanageable collection of MP3s. Picking them up from all kinds of sources means that everything ends up a cluttered mess in no time. Even sorting them out into playlists doesn't solve the problem when there are CDs involved somewhere along the line.

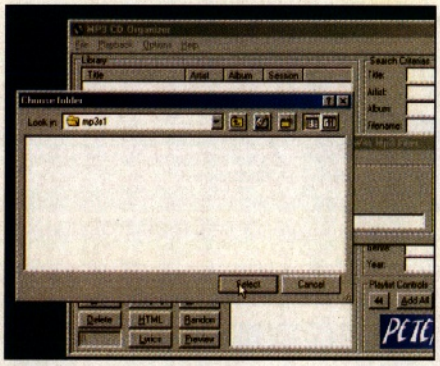
The best way to cure your MP3 woes is to use some kind of organiser. Instead of tying you down to basic playlists as a method of organisation, these programs allow you to set up databases of the songs you possess. And if the word 'database' brings you out in a cold sweat, worry not, as everything is done automatically for you.

Using MP3 CD Organizer, all that's left for you to do is start a search for relevant music files on your drives, and watch as it is all catalogued before your eyes. Setting up playlists should be easier than ever and you'll always know what MP3s you have.



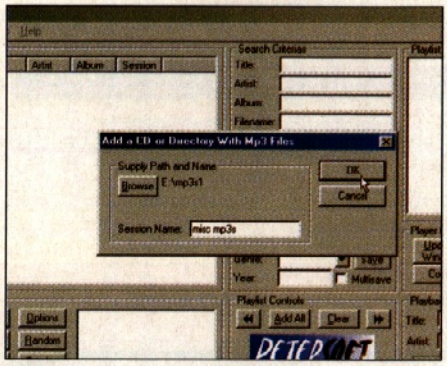
1 Start a new session

After installing MP3 CD Organizer from our Cover CD, open it up. At the moment, it has something of a sparse appearance, because we have no files loaded into it. Let's create a new session. Click on the 'New' button in the 'Options' section of the interface.



2 Browse for files

We now need to find a folder containing MP3s. Organizer works from the root of the folder itself, meaning that you could map an entire hard drive in one shot. Once you've found your folder, click on 'OK'.



3 Add a session name

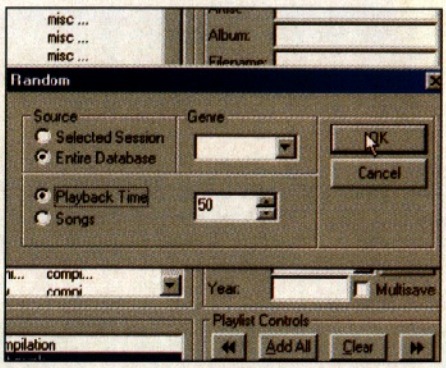
With our folder loaded, all that's left is to create a 'session' name. For session, you might as well read 'folder', as this is the basic premise. Obviously, give your session a name that refers to the songs held within.

4 More sessions

You can now add more and more sessions to your file list. The advantage of this is that you can shove a CD in and catalogue it, so that the track information can be accessed without having the CD there. To view a session list, click on it.

5 Search for a song

With a large number of songs now catalogued, you can search through several discs worth of music for a particular track. To do this, simply enter your search word(s) in the 'title' section of the search field.



6 Random playlists

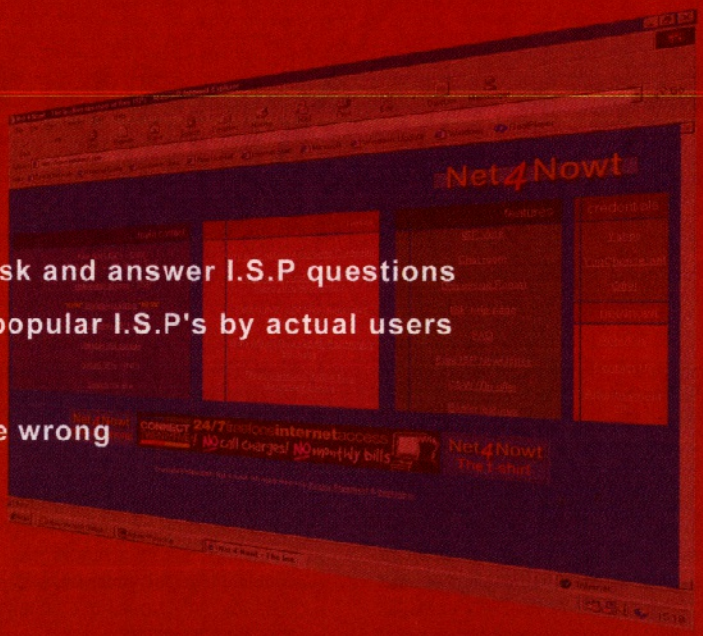
One of the best things in Organizer is the ability to create totally random playlists. Press on 'Random' in the main options toolbar. Click on 'Entire database', then choose to either set a duration by song number or playlist length.

Need a new Internet Service Provider?

Let Net4nowt help.

- Over 300 I.S.P's Listed
- Latest I.S.P News Stories
- Active Discussion Group to ask and answer I.S.P questions
- Reviews and star ratings on popular I.S.P's by actual users

Over 4,000 users a day can't be wrong



www.net4nowt.com
Info@net4nowt.com

Net4Nowt

>MagicalSoupdotcom

Dirt Cheap Domain Names > No hidden costs.

.co.uk £15
.com £40
.net £40
.org £40
.uk.com £80
>All inclusive for 2 Years

Free Magical Xtras
>Web Forwarding
>Email Forwarding
>Change Name Servers
>Change IPS TAG (UK Domains)
>No Release Fees
>Secure Credit Card Payment
>Domain Registered in your name
>Email support

No hidden costs > We recommend you look into buying your domain name carefully. Loads of companies advertise domains at prices too good to be true, because they are. You'll need to look into how much it'll cost you for NIC fees, transfer fees, domain parking and then add VAT. MagicalSoup prices are fully inclusive, the price you see is the price you pay.

>Come have a look at www.magicalsoup.com

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
WebFusion
CONTACT SALES ON 0115 917 0000
OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK

Design a memorable Web site logo

PROJECT 4
TUTORIAL

How to: Turn your site heading into a visual winner with the help of the fully working Satori PhotoXL on this month's CD

You can install Satori Photo XL from thos month's cover CD

NEVER JUDGE A book by a cover, goes the old saying. Well, as far as Web sites go, that's complete rubbish. Your site is judged primarily on first appearances, and with so many billions of pages on the Net, it's hardly surprising that people don't stick around to probe deeper into a site with an abomination of a front page.

A text heading at the top of your home page is never likely to inspire gasps of astonishment from visitors, and performs nothing more than the most basic of tasks. Spend a little time creating a nice logo and put that on your site, and you've suddenly transformed your home page into a visual fest.

Using the fantastic Satori included on this month's cover CD, we'll show you how to create a simple yet effective logo for your site, and instantly make your site infinitely more appealing to visitors.

1 Open your background image

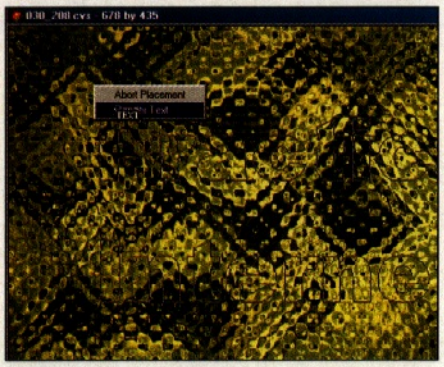
After opening Satori, we need to open a picture to work as a background picture. We're using the 'Textures' section on the free photos on this month's cover CD. Go to 'File' then 'Open', and browse the CD for the relevant picture.

2 Logo text

With our picture now loaded, let's enter the text for the logo. Click on the 'T' icon in the main toolbar, then type your text in the space provided. Change the font to 'Arial Black', size 72 or thereabouts.

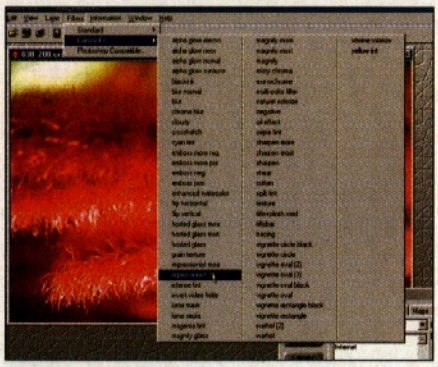
3 Behind the mask

Before we place the text, we need to mask it. This means that the text we place will actually cut out of the main picture. To do this, click on the 'Mask' icon in the 'Actions' toolbox, and click on 'Yes'.



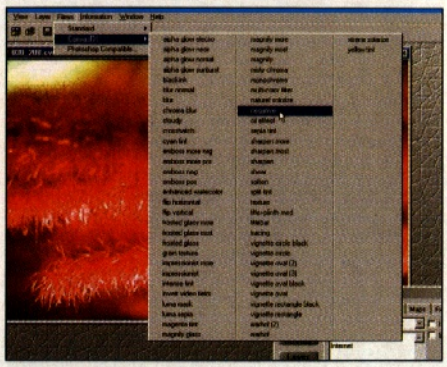
4 Place the text

In order to place the text over your background image, drag the 'TEXT' icon with the text outlined below. If you can't see the text, press the left key. When you're happy with the placement, right click and select 'Render text'.



5 Another image

Now we want an image to place within the text itself, so open another picture from the cover CD in the same way as before. It will open in a new layer, meaning we now have two. Don't worry that you can't see your other image behind this.



6 Adding filters

To spice up our text, let's add a filter to our second image. To do this, you have to first choose a filter to apply by clicking on 'Filters', 'CanvasFX', then choosing the appropriate filter. Unlike some other programs, this doesn't automatically apply the filter.

7 Apply the filter

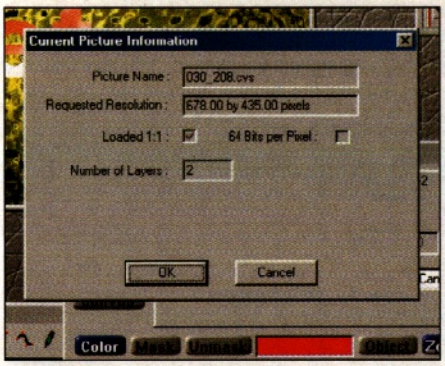
Now, in order to apply the filter, click on the 'Geometry' button in the 'Actions' toolbox, then the 'shape' tab. Choose the rectangle symbol, then draw a rectangle over the area of the picture you want to apply the filter to. We suggest as large an area as possible.

8 Finalising the filter

You can add any number of filters to your picture, following the same principles. Just remember that the only part you're going to see is where the letters of your logo sit. To finalise this, click on the 'Color' icon in the Layers palette.

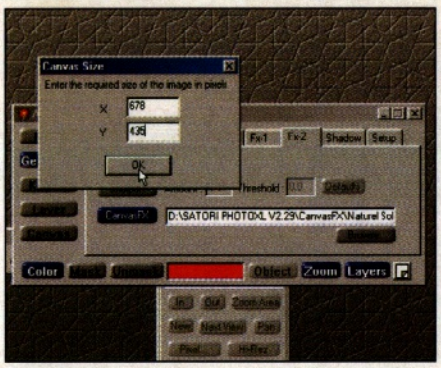
9 Change the layer order

Even after all this, we still can't see our text at all, so let's fix this. All you have to do is drag the top layer down onto the first one, and the order will be reversed. You should now be able to see your first image, with the second one visible in the text.



10 Picture information

Before we start to flatten the image and add some more effects, we'll have to take some information about the size of the picture. This will help us no end. Go to 'Information' then 'Picture', and take note of the image resolution.



11 Save the image, and reopen it

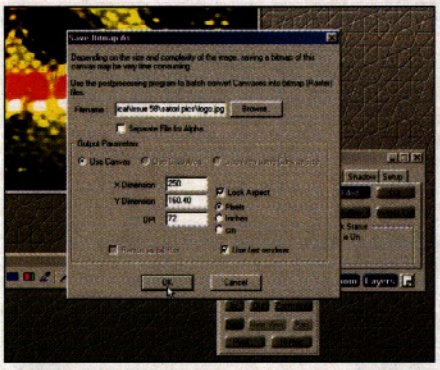
Go to 'File', 'Save As', then save your file. To flatten it, close this image down, then go to 'File', 'Load to Layer'. Browse for the file we've just saved, then press enter. You'll then have to enter the pixel size of the picture, which we took note of before.

12 Applying universal effects

Now that our image is only one layer thick, we can apply filters to all at once. This is exactly the same method as before, only your effects are applied to all parts of the image. Again, when you're done, click on the 'color' part of the layer box to finalise your effects.

13 Export the image

Now that we've jazzed up our text to a suitable degree, let's save it as a JPEG. To do this, click on 'File', then 'Save as'. Give your image a name, then move the file type down to 'JPEG file'. Click on 'Save'.



14 Shifting dimensions

In the box that appears, change the resolution to 72 (from 300). We don't want our logo taking up the whole screen either, so change either of the sizes to around 200, with Lock Aspect Ratio turned on. Click on 'OK'.

15 Your logo

After selecting a quality percentage, your image is now saved. To view it in all its glory, double-click on it to open it in Internet Explorer. The image is now ripe for being placed in any page your wish.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
WebFusion
CONTACT SALES ON 0115 917 0000
OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK

Create your own browser!

PROJECT 5
TUTORIAL

How to: Build your own customised version of Opera, ready to be distributed to anyone you want

You can install Opera from this month's cover disc

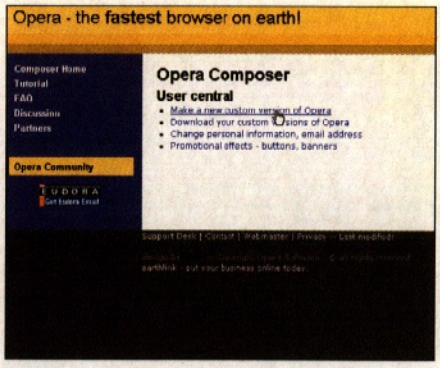
CUSTOMISATION HAS BECOME a major way of browsing life for an increasingly Net-savvy population. People are no longer prepared to accept the bundled browser thrown at them with their new PC.

Unfortunately, customisation is constrained by the limitations of the program. Apart from anything else, you have to gradually ply the browser from its original shape into the personalised kit you know it could be. This is all well and good, but if you want to upgrade the package, or suffer some nightmarish glitch which requires a reinstall, you're back to square one.

Opera, one of the best browsers around, has introduced a fantastic new feature. Called 'Opera Composer', it allows you to customise the exact look and feel of your browser – before you download it. This means you have your own personal browser waiting to be installed as and when you want.

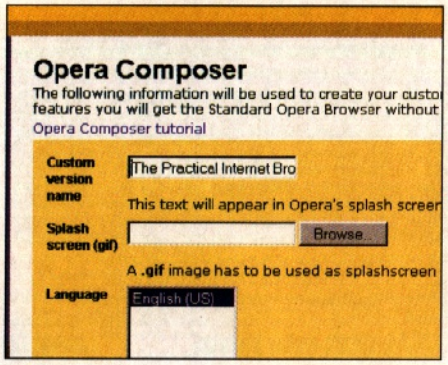
1 Access the Web site

Go to **www.opera.com**, then click on the 'Composer' link on the left. This will take you to the sign-in screen. If you haven't done so already, click on the 'Register' button. Enter your registration details, including a company name, then accept the user agreement.



2 Opera Composer Central

Now that you're a registered user, you'll be taken to the Composer home page. Here, you can tinker with versions of Opera, and download your personalised copy. As this is our first time, click on the 'Make a new custom version of Opera' button.



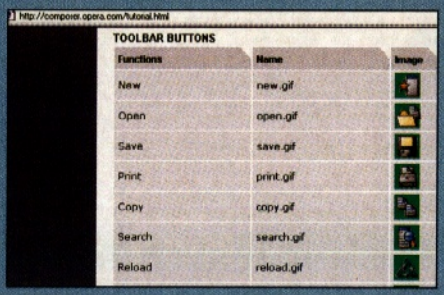
3 Enter a browser name

Before anything else, we have to enter a name for our browser. This is the text that will always appear in the main title bar, so choose it wisely. If you intend to distribute your browser in any way, this is an ideal way to get your name across.

HOW TO...

CREATE BUTTONS FOR YOUR PERSONALISED WEB BROWSER

ONE OF THE most obvious ways of personalising your browser is to use your own buttons for the toolbar. Although these small icons might not seem to pose too many problems, uploading your own buttons is one of the biggest challenges. Follow our six steps to building, testing and incorporating your very own buttons. You will need to have Opera installed for this to work, but it's on this months' cover CD, so shouldn't be too fiddly!



A reference point

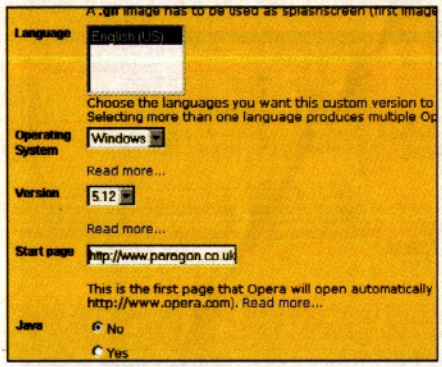
Before you do anything else, we suggest that you open up the Opera site, and click on the 'Composer' link, then 'Tutorial'. If you scroll down to the bottom of the page, you'll see a handy list of button file names, which will prove valuable shortly.

Find your buttons

Next, you'll have to find the graphics that will form the basis for your graphics. We're using the free graphics that came on the Cover CD of *Practical Internet* issue 56 (see page 162 for details of back issues). Import each one into Paint Shop Pro 7.

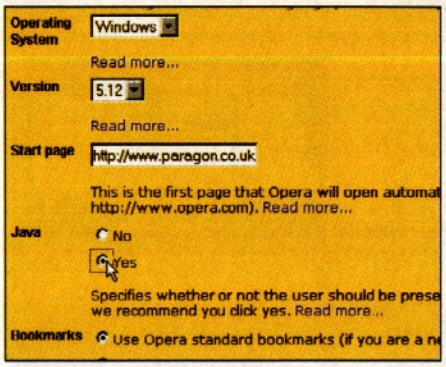
4 Your own splash screen

To give your browser a professional look, you can add a splash screen to display while the browser is loading. We've knocked one up using the *Practical Internet* logo, but you can use whatever you wish. Click on 'Browse' to find it on your hard drive.



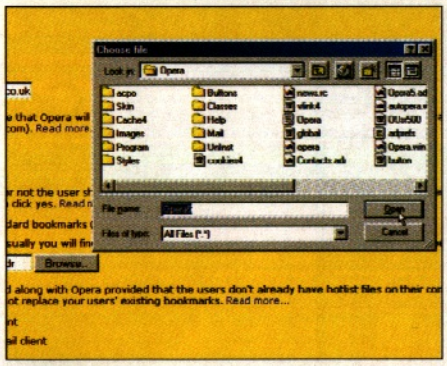
5 More options

When we created our browser, we were limited to Windows and US English. Even if this has changed by the time you read this, you're best sticking to these settings. Enter a URL to act as the home page to your browser, making sure you include 'http://'



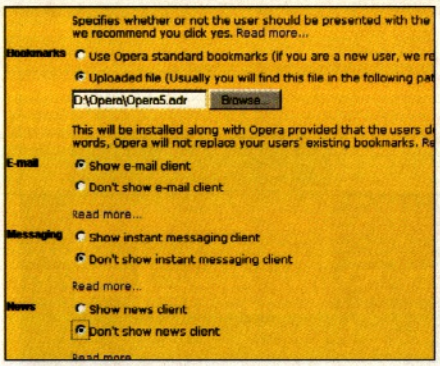
6 The Java choice

Now you can choose whether to include the Java engine with your browser. This depends on the speed of your connection, and how many people are going to use it, as it adds a hefty 5Mb to the final download.



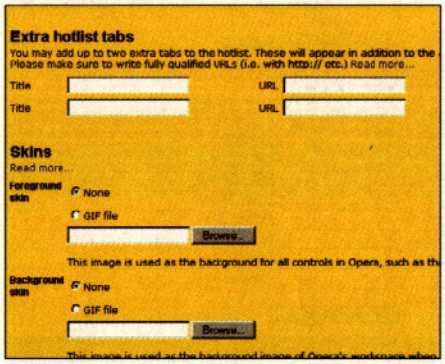
7 Automatic addresses

With this option, you can upload Opera Bookmarks into your personalised browser, so it opens with these automatically installed. You'll have to install a version of Opera to achieve this, though, then upload the favourites folder from your hard drive.



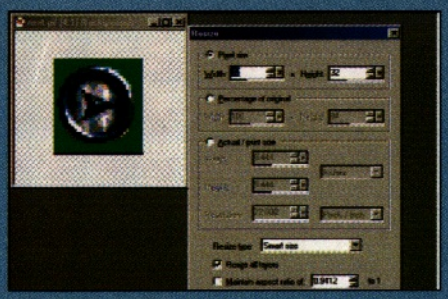
8 Hotlist action

To get the best out of your browser, you don't want any more than three hotlist items. As Bookmarks and Contacts are two down already, we suggest you go for either the Email or Messaging icon from the three choices given to you.



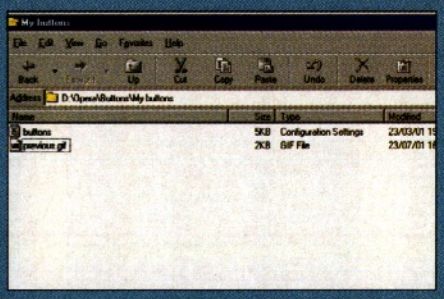
9 Personal hotlist action

This option will only apply to you if you've set up a specific section of your site devoted to providing information in this space. So, unless you've got some great gizmo that you want to show off at all times, we suggest you give this a miss.



Edit the button

Each button should be 32x32 (press 'Shift + S' in Paint Shop Pro). For contrast values, it's also best to place your button in front of a garish green background. Once you're happy, save it to a new folder with the relevant button name. Make sure it's a GIF.



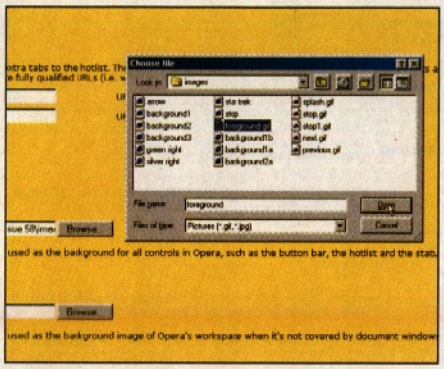
Testing your button

Now, it starts to get complicated. Open the Opera program folder (most likely C:\Program Files\Opera'), then open the buttons folder. Copy your newly created folder into here, then open the Default folder, copy the buttons.ini file there, and paste it into your own folder.

Viewing the button

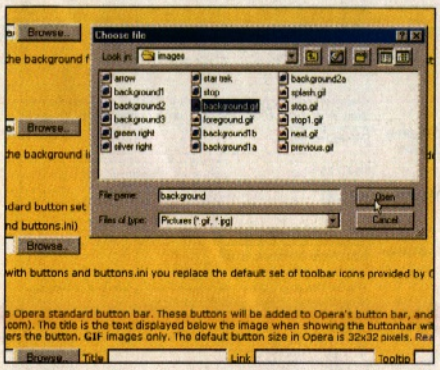
Now, to see this first button in action, open Opera. Go to 'File', 'Preferences' then 'toolbars'. In the drop down menu, choose the name corresponding to your own folder, then click 'Apply'. You should be able to see any problems at this point, so just make the necessary changes.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
WebFusion
CONTACT SALES ON 0115 917 0000
OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK



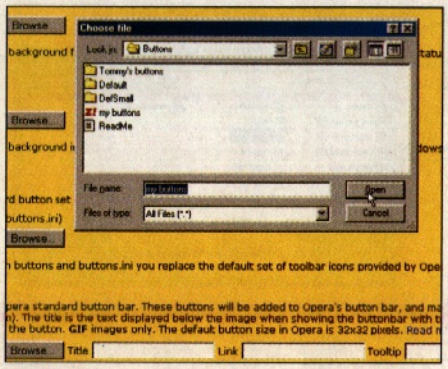
10 Add a foreground image

Next up, you can add an image to act as background on the toolbar. We've chosen an image from our Issue 56 Cover CD of clip art. Again, the principle is the same. Browse your hard drive for the relevant image, which must be a GIF to work.



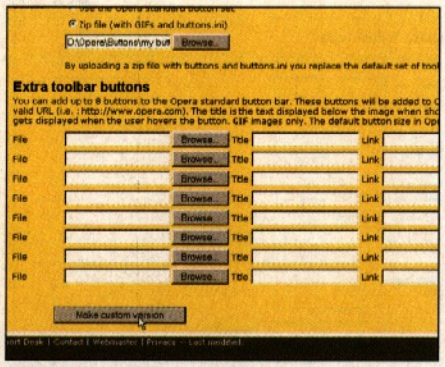
11 And a background image

Adding a background image, to sit in empty browser windows, is exactly the same. Image file size isn't a major issue here, as once the program is installed, the image is stored on the user's hard drive.



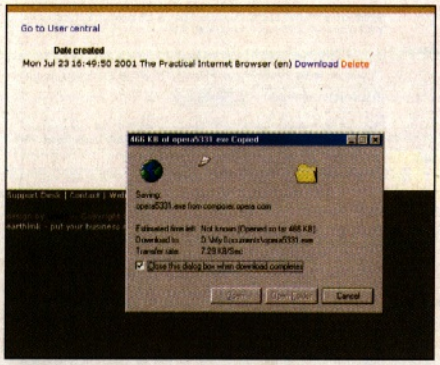
12 Add some custom buttons

Next, check our handy guide to creating your own buttons below. Once you've done this, the most long-winded part of the whole process, you're ready to upload your toolbar buttons. This procedure follows the same principles as before.



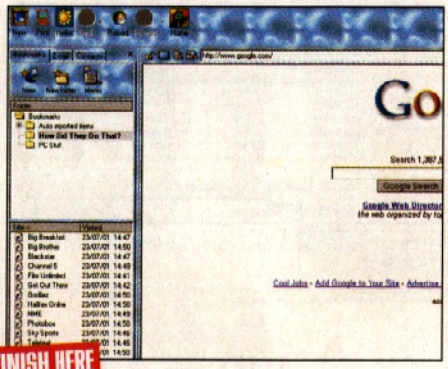
13 Make the browser

If you wish to add extra buttons outside of the standard fayre, you can do so at the bottom of the page. Otherwise, you're all set. Click on the 'Make custom browser' button. This will take a few minutes. Download the browser by clicking on the appropriate link.



14 The download

Depending on whether you've chosen to include Java support or not, your download will take anything from ten minutes to an hour. Once you've done this, all you need do is double-click on the downloaded file to install it.

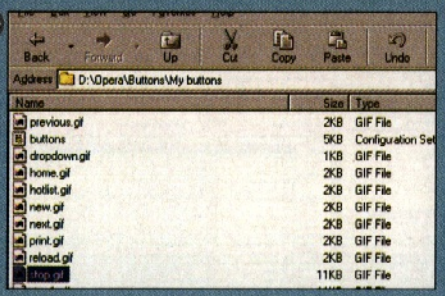


FINISH HERE

15 Your browser

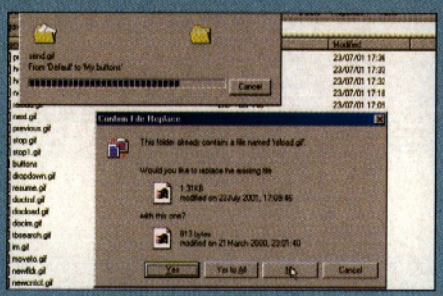
And so, here it is. After a couple of hours effort, you have your own branded browser, which you can copy to CD and pass among as many people as you want. And everyone who installs the program will automatically have your settings.

CREATE BUTTONS CONTINUED



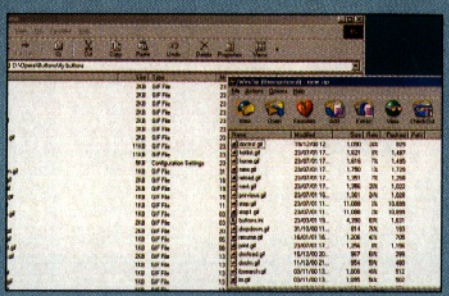
More buttons

Creating the rest of the buttons for your site follows a similar path. Again, use the exact name of the file as shown on the 'tutorial' page of the Opera site, and you shouldn't go too far wrong.



A full set

Before we zip our buttons up, we have to make sure that we've catered for every potential button available. The easiest way to do this is to go into the 'default' buttons folder, select all, copy, then paste into your own folder. Click 'No' every time you're asked if you want to overwrite any files.



Zip it up

Now all that's left to do is compress our buttons into a handy zip file. (If you don't have WinZip, install it from our Cover CD). Open WinZip, click on 'Classic Interface', then drag the contents of your folder into WinZip. Once you've saved your zipped file, you're ready to upload.

POWERFUL YET SIMPLE INTERNET SOLUTIONS

Simply Names

'Europe's Leading Domain Registrar'

- .co.uk .com .net .org plus EUROPEAN DOMAINS

.it ITALY	.ru RUSSIA	.fr FRANCE
.at AUSTRIA	.ch SWITZERLAND	.de GERMANY
.dk DENMARK	.ro ROMANIA	.lu LUXEMBOURG
.pl POLAND	.be BELGIUM	and many more...

Simply Hosting

Quality Hosting & E-mail Accounts

Account-	Mail	Soho	Enterprise	Corporate
Web Space	×	50Mb	100Mb	150Mb
Pop3 Mail Boxes	✓	×	×	×
Email Forwarding	✓	✓	✓	✓
Email Aliases	✓	✓	✓	✓
Web Forwarding	✓	×	×	×
Unlimited FTP	×	✓	✓	✓
Cgi-Bin	×	✓	✓	✓
Site Statistics	×	✓	✓	✓
MySQL PHP SSI	×	×	✓	✓

Simply Servers

- Cobalt RAQ Servers
- Individually Configured UNIX Servers

Manage your accounts using our highly acclaimed control panel!

simplynames www.simplynames.com

Zone One, Malvern Hills Science Park, Malvern, WR14 3SZ UK Tel: +44 (0)1684 893020 e-mail: sales@simplynames.com

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
WebFusion
CONTACT SALES ON 0115 917 0000
OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK

Master your email address book

PROJECT 6
TUTORIAL

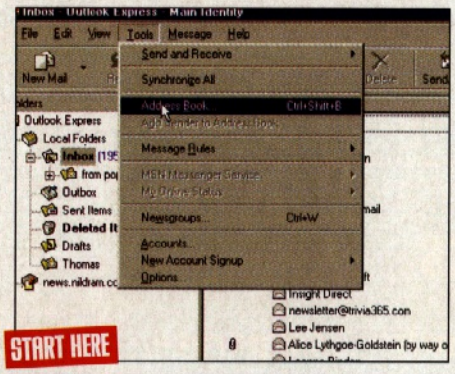
How to: Avoid spending ages sorting multiple email addresses by creating an Outlook Express group

You can install Outlook Express from this month's cover disc

DESPITE THE MULTITUDES of people with email addresses, most of us end up sending our messages to the same people day in, day out. What's more, the majority of emails we send are to a group of friends.

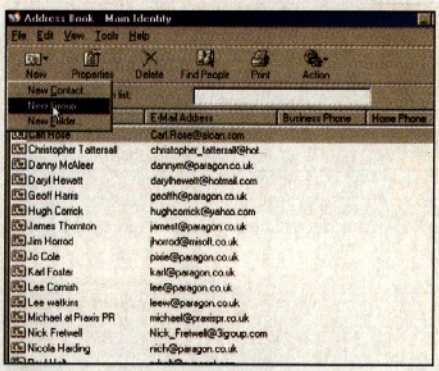
For the uninitiated, this involves entering a whole string of email addresses in the 'To' field. The slightly more savvy out there have sussed that replying to all achieves the same purpose in less time. But for those of you who want to keep control of Outlook Express in every way, there is only one method of sending your group emails.

All you have to do is create a group within your Address Book, which you can then enter in the 'To' field. With this simple masterstroke, you'll find you can shave minutes off your emailing time, and spend it in far more industrious pursuits, like composing the message itself.



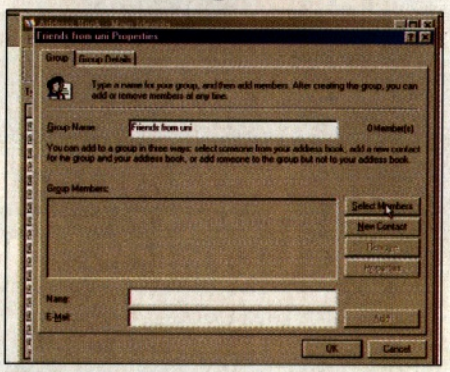
1 Open the Address Book

Before we do anything else, we'll have to open up the Address Book in Outlook Express. To access it, you can either select 'Tools' from the main menu, then 'Address Book' or simply press 'CTRL', 'SHIFT', 'B'.



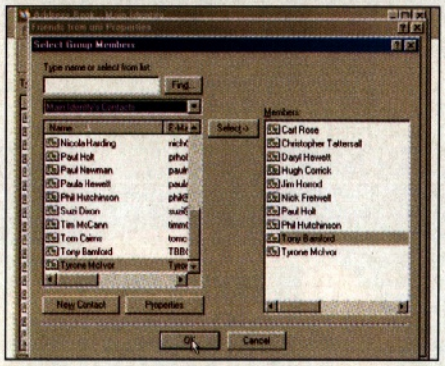
2 Create a new group

With your address book open, you should be able to see a list of your contacts. We want to start turning them into groups, so you have to click on the relevant link. To do this, click on the 'New' button, then select 'New group'.



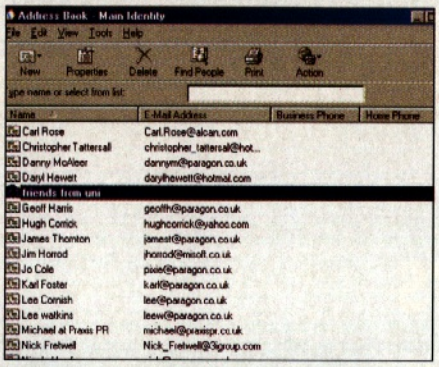
3 A group name

First things first, let's give our group a name. It makes sense to give your group a name relevant to the people within it. Once you've done this, click on the 'Select members' button to start adding people to your group.



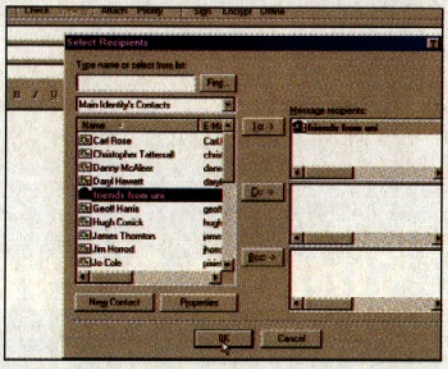
4 Adding members

You'll be presented with the list of all your contacts on the left of this screen. To add a new member to your group, just click on their name then on the 'Select' button in the middle. Once you've done this with all of your members, click 'OK', then 'OK' again.



5 The new address book

This will take you back to the main Address Book, which looks much the same as before, with the exception of the new group we've created. Notice that the icon next to the group is different to the rest of your contacts. Close the Address Book.



6 Composing a message

Now, when you compose a new message (click on the 'New Mail' icon), you can access the group by clicking on the 'To' box, and moving down the contacts list. Double-click on your group, then press 'OK', and you're ready to write an email to your group.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
WebFusion
CONTACT SALES ON 0115 917 0000
OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK

Create a Favicon for your site

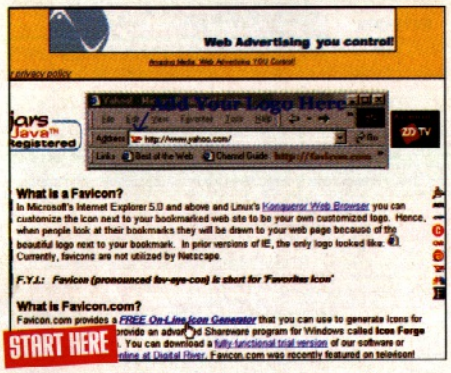
PROJECT 7
TUTORIAL

How to: Generate icons for your Web site that appear in your visitors' Favorites

SINCE THE RELEASE of Internet Explorer 5.0, browsers and their users have been able to view all manner of funky icons next to their Favorites. These 'Favicons', as they're known in the business, help to illustrate what that site is about and may consist of a simple symbol or a company logo.

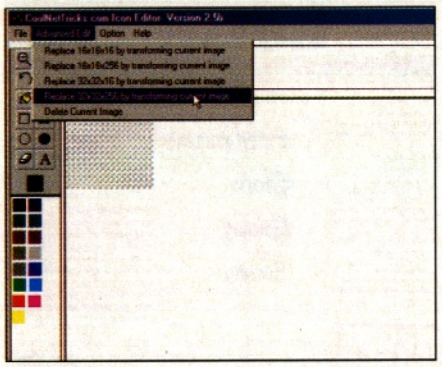
Favicons are an effective way of pulling in the punters to your site and now, thanks to Favicon.com you can generate your very own. As a result, when people view their Favorites, your wondrous icon will grab attention.

The free online icon generator at Favicom.com provides all manner of tools for drawing lines, boxes and shapes in glorious Technicolor™. While its best to keep the shapes you draw as simple as possible it's possible to create some eye-catching results. Once you have fashioned a snazzy logo the site will email you a file containing the image, which you can then add to your HTML.



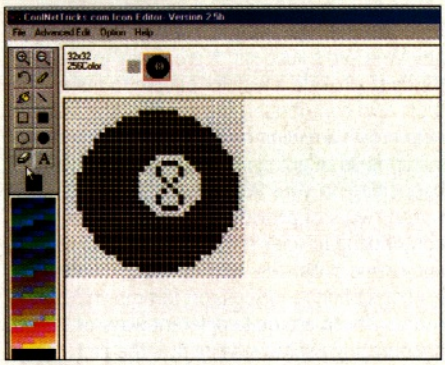
1 Visit the home page

Go to the Favicon.com home page at **www.favicon.com**. You'll be told if you're using a Favicon-aware browser. As long as you're using IE5 or above this shouldn't be a problem. To start making your own icon, click on the link to the 'Free Online Icon Generator'.



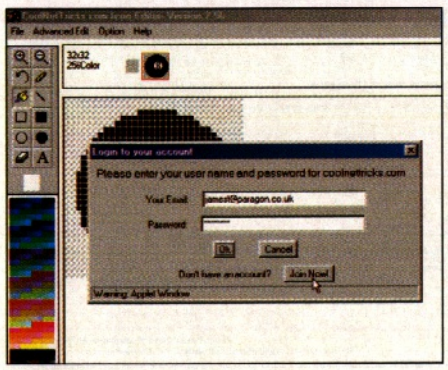
2 Customising the editor

The icon editor will now load. In order to get more precision and control over the drawing we'll need to change the grid size and the number of colours available. Do this by selecting 'Advanced Edit' and choosing 'Replace 32x32x256 by transforming current image'.



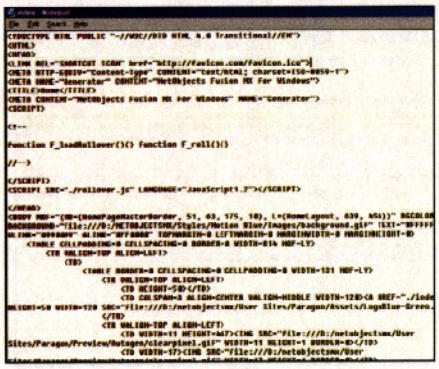
3 Drawing your icon

Now click the larger of the two grey boxes above the grid. Draw your icon using the control panel on the left. You can experiment with each of the different tools and colours from the colour palette and it is possible to delete any mistakes using the eraser tool.



4 Saving the image

Once you've finished drawing your icon you need to request for it to be sent to you via email. Click 'File' and then 'Save/download'. You'll need to register with the Coolnettricks service, so fill in your details and click 'OK'. Your icon will now be emailed to you.



5 Retrieving your icon

Check your email as there should be a message waiting for you with your favicon file attached. Add this file to the same directory as your html file. Alternatively, copy and paste the <LINK> tag from the email into the <head> section of your page.

6 Viewing the Favicon

Your icon will now appear in the Favorites directory of your Web browser, in 'Favourites' on the Windows Start menu, and the location bar in Explorer. Hold down 'Ctrl' and right-click on the Favorite. Now you can drag it onto either the desktop, taskbar or links bar.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
WebFusion
CONTACT SALES ON 0115 917 0000
OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK

Make your site a community

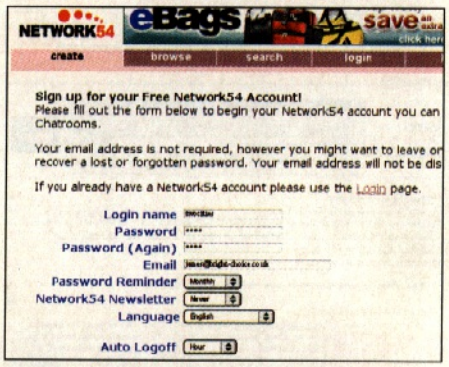
PROJECT 8
TUTORIAL

How to: Add a customisable bulletin board and chat room to your site to make it into a community-oriented resource

ENCOURAGING USER LOYALTY is essential to any Web site's success. A great way to achieve this is to provide a way for people to make their own contribution to your site. This will help create a feeling of community, hopefully inspiring an ongoing interest in what's happening on your Web pages. There are various ways of providing users with a way of contributing to your site, such as guestbooks and online polls. This tutorial covers two other leading options – discussion forums and chat rooms. These are quite different ways of encouraging user involvement – the first involves posting email-like messages as part of a themed 'thread' of discussion. Chat rooms are more immediate, as they require users to be simultaneously online to exchange messages in the style of ICQ and other instant messaging tools. These two come together neatly in Network 54, the free service we explore here.

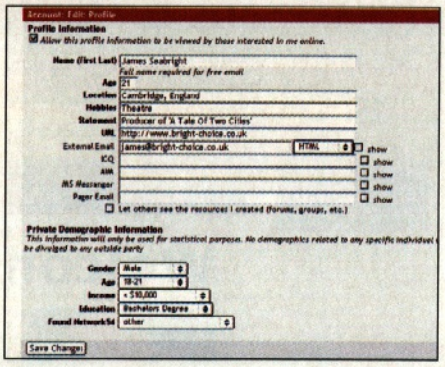
1 Getting started at Network 54

Point your Web browser at **www.network54.com**. Before starting to make your board and chat room, it might be a good idea to browse the 'Spotlight' categories and see what other people have done. When you're ready to begin your own, click 'Build It Now'.



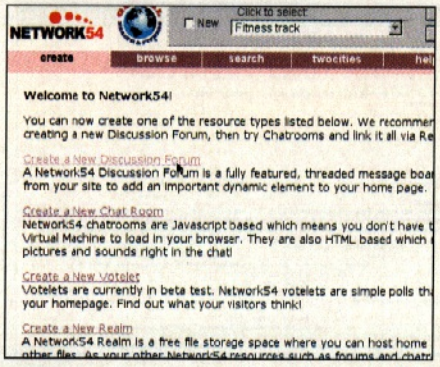
2 Registering your details

Click 'Sign Up Now' to see this page. It requires you to provide basic information in order to set up an account on the network. This will allow you both to set up your own boards and to contribute to others. Click 'Create Account' to continue.



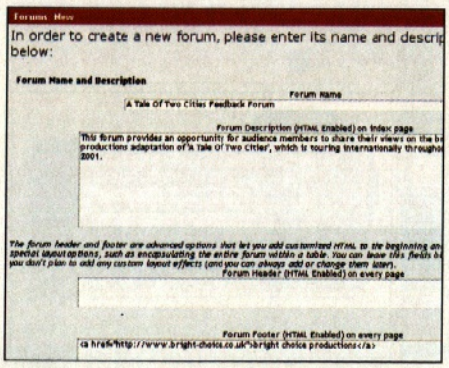
3 Personal profile details

You're given the option to provide a personal profile for others' reference – if you don't want the details made public then just make sure the check box at the top of the page in not ticked. When you've filled in your details, click 'Save Changes'.



4 Selecting a resource to create

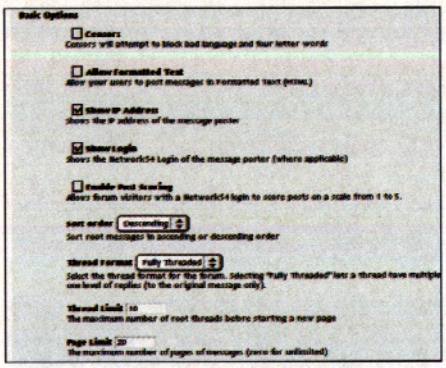
Now that you're fully registered with the network, you can start creating your first site add-on. To get started, click on the 'Create a New Discussion Forum' link. We'll add a chat room later, and you can explore the other two options yourself if required.



5 Setting up the forum details

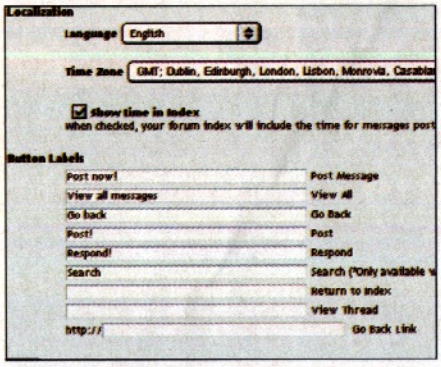
First step in the forum set up is to give the forum a name and description. Then enter anything you wish to appear at the top and bottom of each page in the 'header' and 'footer' section. Select the channel that best describes your site from the pop-up menu.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
WebFusion
CONTACT SALES ON 0115 917 0000
OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK



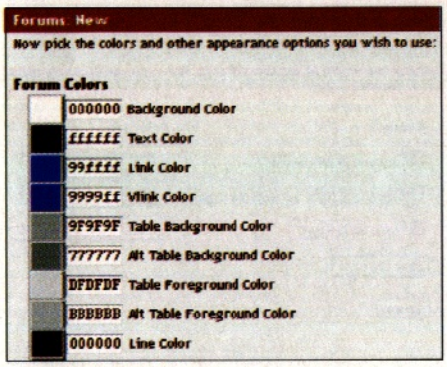
6 Choosing basic forum options

Scroll down the same page as in step five and you'll find more options. The default settings should be fine – although it's worth reading the descriptions to see if your forum demands something different, such as the 'Censors' option for sites aimed at children.



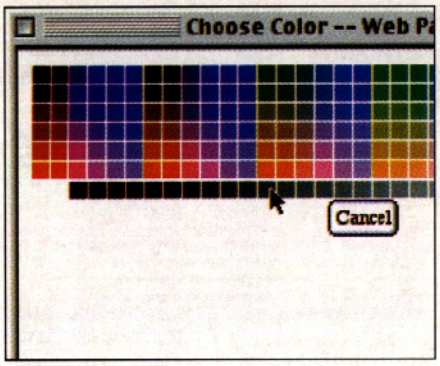
7 Specialist options

The final options on this page are particularly useful if your site uses a language other than English, because you can specify the time zone used on entries and the text on buttons labels throughout the forum. When you're happy with the settings, click 'Create'.



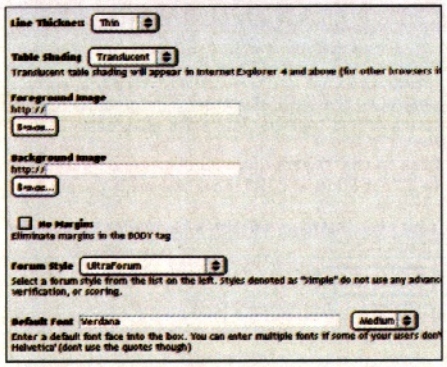
8 Setting a colour scheme

It's possible to configure your own colour scheme for the discussion board to make it match the rest of your site design. If you're not sure which colours to specify, refer back to the HTML code of your site to find the correct colour codes.



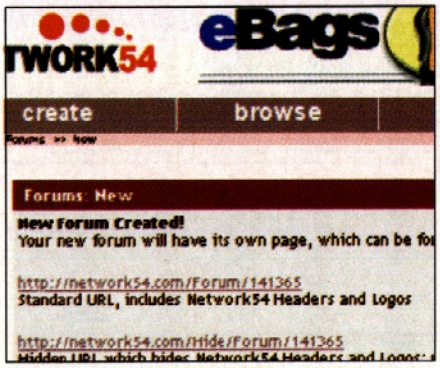
9 Using the colour palette

If you know the correct codes, type them into the text boxes. Alternatively, click one of the colour swatches, and you will see a palette appear on your screen. Simply click on the desired colour to select it. Repeat this step for as many colours as you need to pick.



10 Other appearance settings

There are more appearance options further down the page. These include the use of images (such as logos) on the forum pages – to do this, click 'Browse' and locate the image. Set any other desired options, and click 'Continue' when you're done.



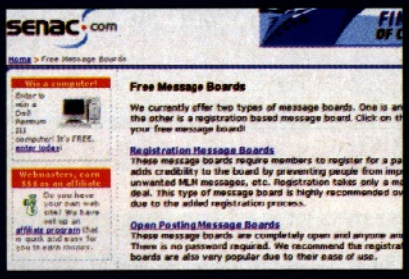
11 Linking to the completed forum

The forum will be created and Web addresses for it shown on-screen. The first address provided includes Network 54 livery, whereas the second one is more useful for linking in from your site, as it shows just the forum. Click on it to see for yourself.

HOW TO...

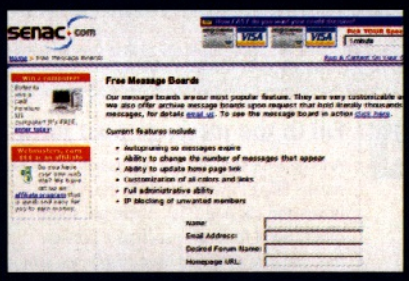
CREATE COMMUNITIES

In a hurry to get your community board online? Take a look at these three easy steps, which will ease your way into the board business in double-quick time



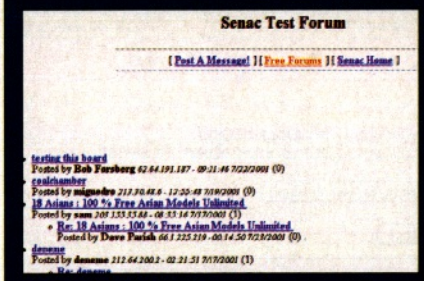
Selecting the type of board

Go to www.senac.com/mb and you will see two options for different kinds of board. For this speedy example, we've chosen the second type of board, which allows more free access than the other, and thus requires less input and ongoing time commitment from the site owner.



Providing your details

Enter your name, email address, forum title and home page address in the boxes provided. Select any relevant areas of interest by checking the tick boxes and then click on the button at the bottom of the page.



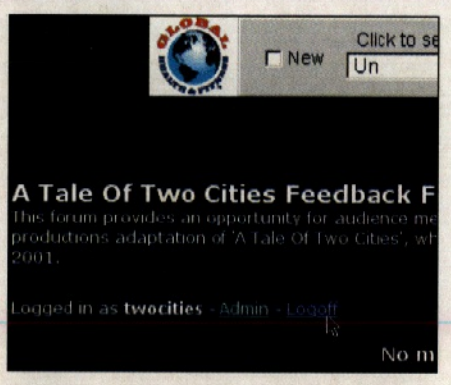
Setting up the forum

Check your email and a message should be waiting for you with all the details you need to get your forum started in no time at all. The forum shown above is a good example of a basic, no frills design that can be generated in no time.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
WebFusion
CONTACT SALES ON 0115 917 0000
OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK

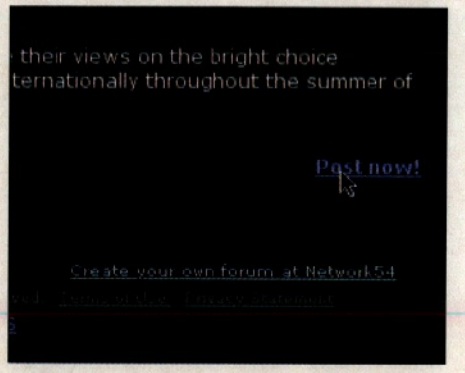
TOP TIP!

Linking between your discussion board and existing site is easy - just copy the link provided by Network 54 and paste it into your Web editing package. If you are coding HTML by hand, a link can be added manually using this framework: Link to my discussion forum. The 'target' property provided will make the board appear in a new browser window. Just remove the target="_blank" section of the link if you want users to stay in the existing browser window. You don't have to just provide links to the main board- you can link from specific pages to specific sections of the discussion board- just bring up the relevant board page in your Web browser, then copy and paste the URL into the HTML code.



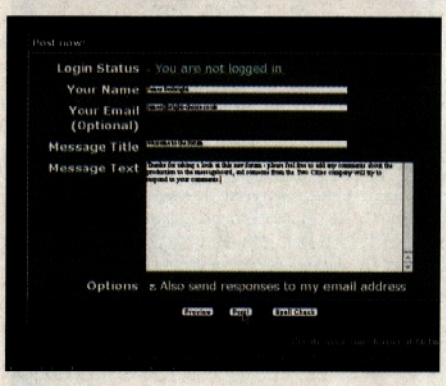
12 Testing the forum as a guest

It's a good idea to see what the forum looks like from the visitor's perspective, so when you reach the main forum page, click the 'Logoff' link. This will return you to the forum front page as a non-registered user, so you'll see exactly the same as any other visitor.



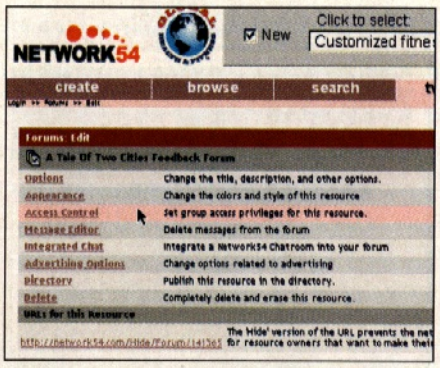
13 Creating the first message

Provided that you have not barred unregistered users from posting messages to the forum, you should now click the 'Post Now' button on the right of the screen, to start composing the first message for inclusion in the forum.



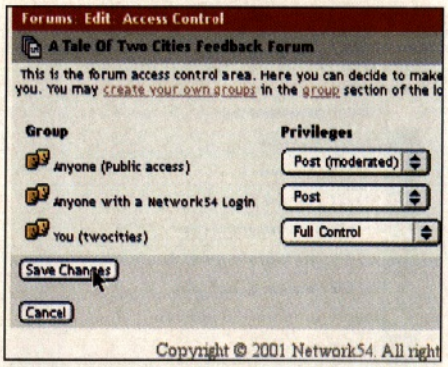
14 Fill in the message post form

Adding a message to the discussion board just means filling in your details in the relevant boxes and clicking 'Post'. There are some other useful features – such as a preview function, the option to have responses sent to you by email, and a spell checker.



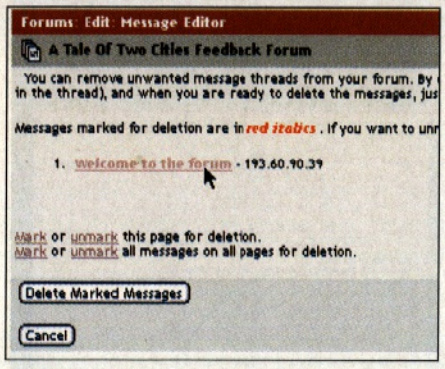
15 Further configuration

With the basics set up, we'll turn to some more advanced features. Click the 'Log in' link on the forum, and enter your details. Then click 'Admin' and go to the 'Edit' page shown above. We'll start by fine-tuning the 'Access Control' – click that link to begin.



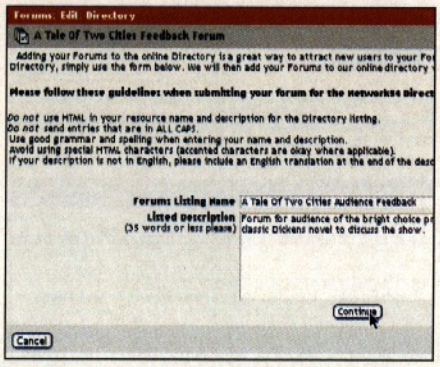
16 Setting access control levels

The access control features can help ensure your board doesn't get misused by malicious visitors. The settings shown here are a good way forward, allowing other Network 54 users to post straight away, and requiring your approval for other users' messages to appear.



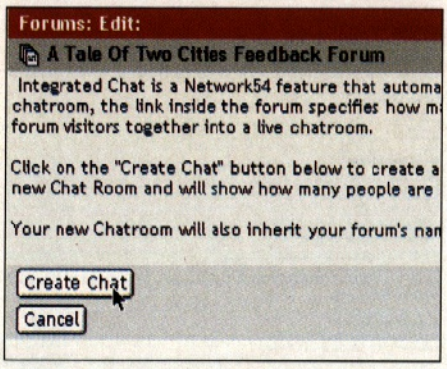
17 Editing existing messages

In case that there are problems with abuse of the message board by inappropriate posts, you can regain control using the 'Message Editor' feature accessed from the 'Edit' menu. Simply click the offending message, then click 'Delete Marked Messages'.



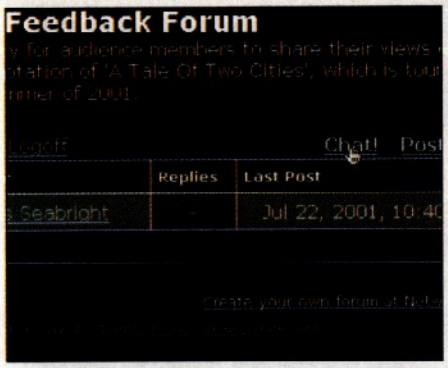
18 Join the Network 54 directory

Another way of promoting your forum and site is through the directory which features prominently on the front page of the Network 54 site. To do this, click the 'Directory' link from the 'Edit' menu and enter the details of your forum, as shown above.



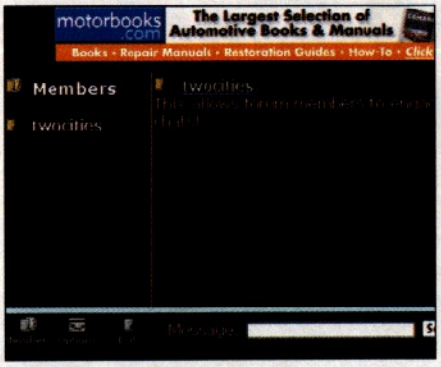
19 Adding a chat room

Another option accessible from the 'Edit' menu is the addition of an integrated chat room. This will follow the same appearance as the main forum, and will allow instant communication between users. Just click the 'Create Chat' button to turn on this feature.



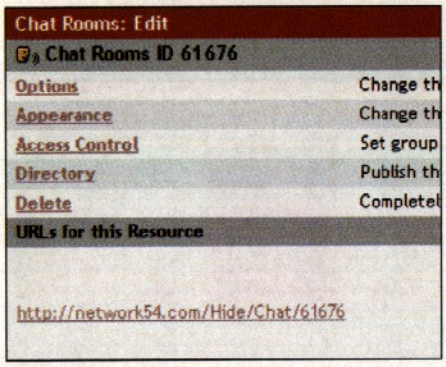
20 Testing the chat room

If you return to the forum's main page again, you will now see a 'Chat' link next to the 'Post now' link. Click the link to take a look at the new feature. You can change what these links say in the 'Appearance' options under the 'Edit' menu.



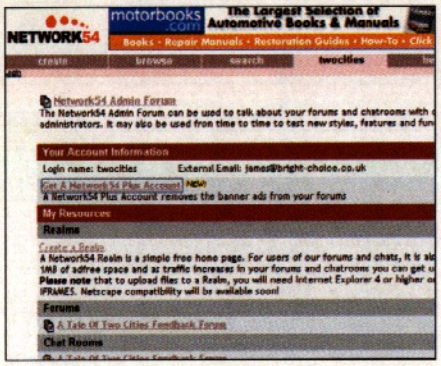
21 Talking to yourself...

As it's rather new, you're likely to be the only member currently logged in to your new chat room. When there are other people around, you can see their names listed down the left, and select who can read messages you send. Click 'Exit' to return to the forum.



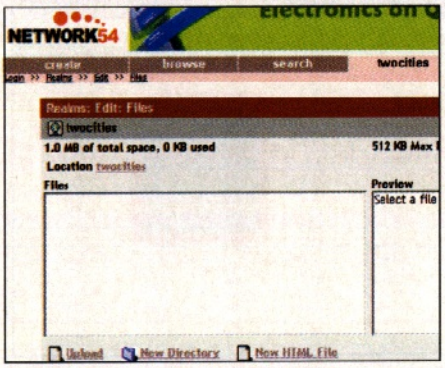
22 Configuring the chat room

The chat room has its own configuration menu accessible via the 'Admin' link of the discussion board. It has similar options to the board, upon which the settings of new chat rooms are based. A Web address is also given so you can link to chat from your site.



23 Further Network 54 options

You can take advantage of the other services offered by Network 54 from the main login menu of your account, accessible by clicking your login name at the top of any page. These include online votes and an upgrade to the ad-free service for $18 (£13) a month.



24 Lord of your own realm

A particularly useful extra Network 54 feature that we don't have space to cover in detail here is the 'Realm' option, which gives you up to one megabyte of free home page space without ad banners. This is accessible from the login page shown in step 23.

FINISH HERE

25 Use Network 54's online help

There is a comprehensive help resource available for all Network 54 services – just click on the 'Help' button at the top of any page to reach the searchable index. If your problem isn't documented, a support contact link is also available on this page.

JARGON BUSTER

IP address
Internet Protocol address – four numbers separated by full stops, which pick out an individual node on the Net. This isn't quite the same as identifying an individual computer, because dial-up providers have a number of IP addresses which are dynamically assigned to their customers, meaning that the same IP may be used by any number of machines over any given period. It is possible to block troublesome IP addresses from posting to your board, but for the reasons already outlined this may not actually solve anything.

Thread
To avoid big discussion boards becoming unusable monsters, they are divided into themed areas of messages called threads. These are identified by unique subject headings, and basically form individual topics of conversation within the wider board discussion.

Spam
This is something you should hope doesn't trouble your discussion board. It is a word used mainly with reference to email, but is becoming increasingly common on discussion boards. Basically it involves another Net user - or a computer they have programmed- posting irrelevant and normally commercially oriented messages to your board.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Everyone Net
www.everyone.net
Another great online community building resource

ICQ
www.icq.com
Instant messaging service with handy home page extras

Infopop
www.infopop.com
Purveyors of highly specified pay service bulletin boards

Webware
www.webware.com
Search for other Web-based add-ons at this huge site

Total Webmaster
www.totalwebmaster.com
Good range of links to handy resource sites for Web builders

Blogger
www.blogger.com
If you're more interested in creating a Web log, try this site instead

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
WebFusion
CONTACT SALES ON 0115 917 0000
OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK

Create slick Flash site menus

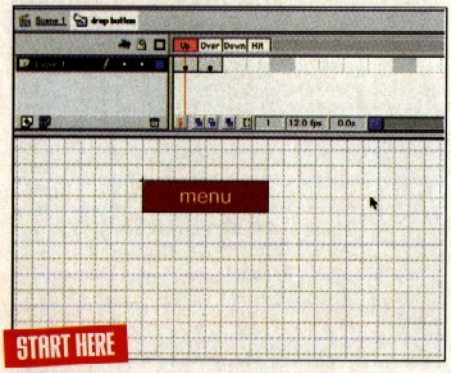
PROJECT 9
TUTORIAL

How to: Create simple animated drop down menus in Flash 5, a trial of which is on this month's free CD

DROP DOWN MENUS should be a familiar concept as they're used on almost every piece of software and they're on the menu bar at the top of your screen. They are nice and simple to use – you just roll your mouse over the menu title for a drop down list to appear. You then choose the command you want from this list. Another advantage of this type of menu is that a number of options can be hidden behind one tab, which frees up some valuable desktop space.

When creating an interface, it can be useful to have a number of options stored in this way as it gives more space for logos, intro text or animation. You have to remember that Web browser bars and buttons tend to intrude into screen space, so drop down menus become a tidy form of navigation.

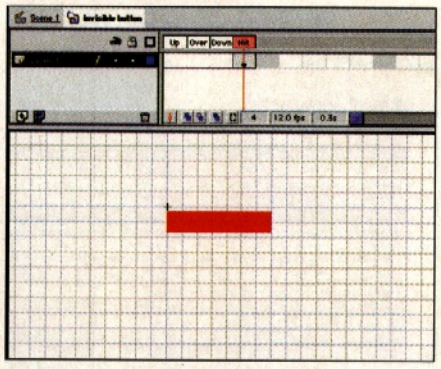
The example in this tutorial has been designed in Flash 5 but will work well on Flash 4, although some of the dialog boxes will be accessed in a different way.



START HERE

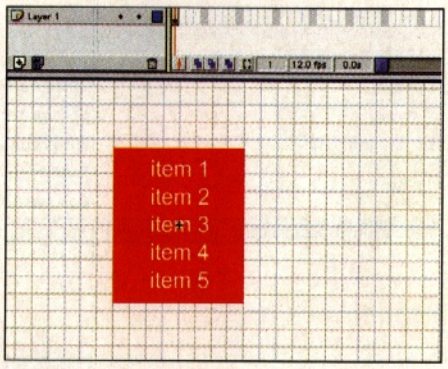
1 Create the button

First create a button symbol (Ctrl + F8). We've got snap to grid on and have made it 8 x 2 boxes on the grid. Only create the button in the Up and Over state, you may want to highlight the button in the Over state.



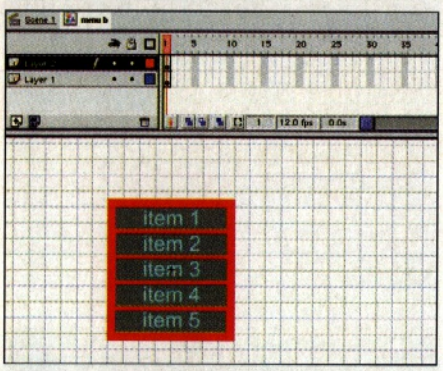
2 Invisible buttons

We're going to create an invisible button, which has the advantage of being reusable as they can be placed over any piece of text to make it into a button. Just create a rectangle over the Hit state of a new button symbol.



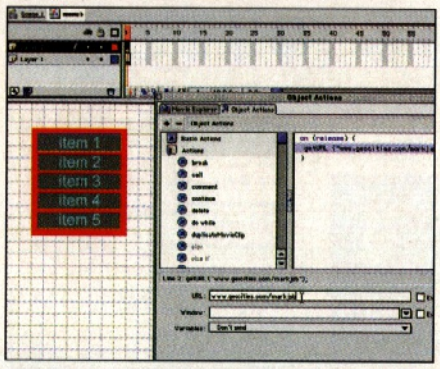
3 Create the menu

Create a new symbol and this time make it a graphic. Draw a rectangle that measures eight squares across on the grid and as many down as you need to fit your items into. Then type your items over the top, in the example we have five items.



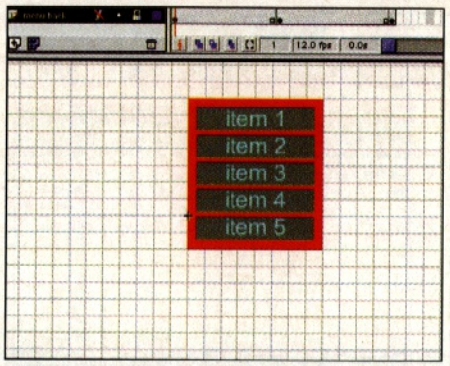
4 Add a layer

Create a new layer and the invisible button off your library (Ctrl + L to bring it up). Place this over the top of each of the text items in your previous layer. Note that they show up as a semi-transparent box, this will not be visible in the final movie.



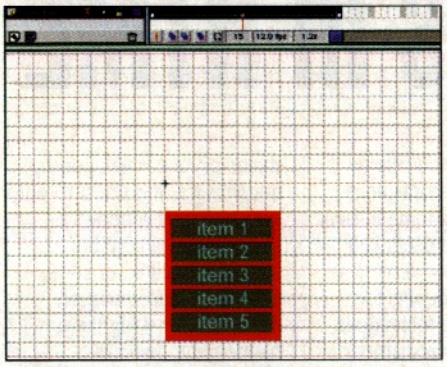
5 Get interactive

Now select each of your invisible buttons in turn and press the arrow in the bottom of the main window to bring up the Actions dialog box. Add the action to your button such as Get URL, load Movie or whatever is appropriate.



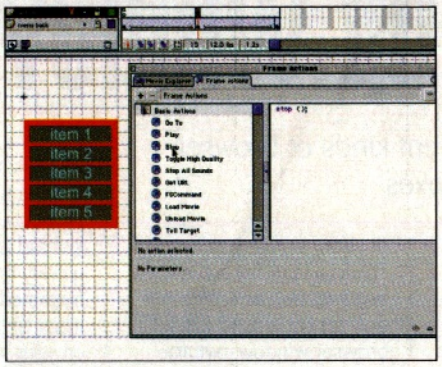
6 Put it all together

Call it Menu b. Select all and group it. Create a new symbol and this time make it a movie clip and call it Menu. Drag off Menu b from your library and place it on the stage. Make a keyframe (Ctrl+ F6) at frame 30 and then again at 15.



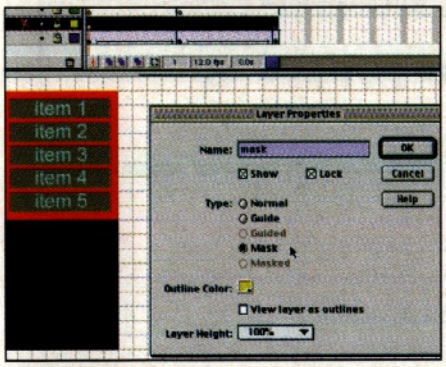
7 Animate the menu

At key frame 15 move the menu to directly below where it was originally placed then select all frames on this layer and add a motion tween. This should now have a smooth animation up and down.



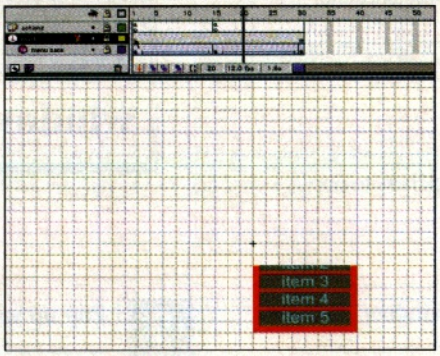
8 Stop and start

Add a new layer to this movie clip and call it Actions. Add keyframes at frame 1 and 15 (F6) and press the arrow in the bottom corner of the movie window to bring up the Actions dialog. Place a Stop command in both of these frames.



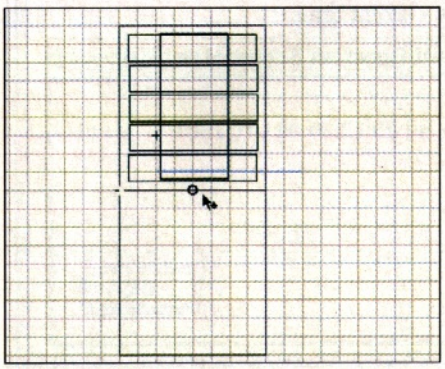
9 Mask it out

Add a new layer and place it directly above the layer with the menu. Draw a rectangle on the stage the same shape and size as the menu and place it in frame 1. Now double-click the layer to bring up layer properties and select mask.



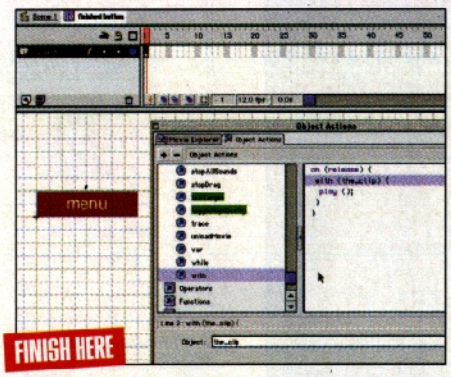
10 Try it out

Everything should have disappeared from your stage. Hit 'Return' to try out your movie clip and you should see your menu slide in and stop. If you hit return again your menu will slide out again. Next we're going to control this with the first button you made.



11 Finishing touches

Create another symbol and once again make this a movie clip, call it Finished button. Drag off the clip labelled Menu. If you press and hold it you can see an outline, place this next to the cross hairs so you know where it is. In the instance panel, label it the_clip.



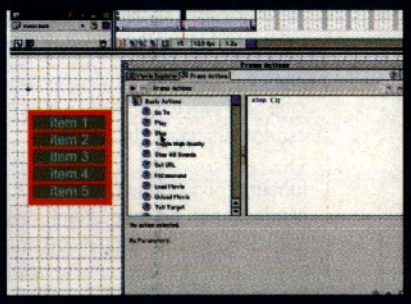
12 Last Script

Drag off the first button and place this directly over the menu clip. Then go to the frame actions and give it a With command from the actions list and use the_clip then give it a Play command. You can now test your movie as the target

THE QUICK METHOD

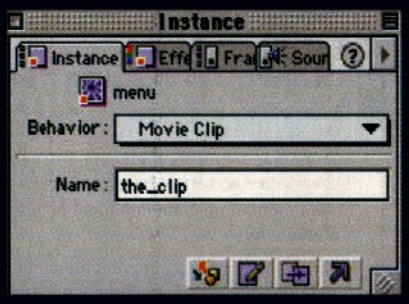
SCRIPTING EXPLAINED

ACTIONSCIPT IN FLASH has now become huge, and it helps to know what goes on under the bonnet. With this in mind, here's a quick guide to what is happening with the simple ActionScript in this tutorial.



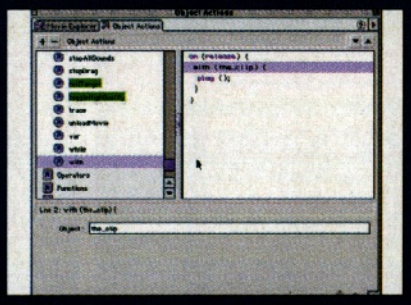
Why stop?

The stopping action in the menu movie clip simply stops the play of the movie at a point of our control. In this case, it's when the menu has rolled out and gone back in again. As this is a movie clip this will not stop any other action going on in the main movie.



the_clip

You may have wondered why we labelled the menu movie clip in step 11. This was so that when we come to place the button over the top we have something to work with as we can specify the exact clip that this button is controlling.



Let play commence

The With command (the last command in the actions set) is used to call the_clip, notice that the on release is automatically filled in when you select with. It is then told to play because previously this is stopped (frame 1 of the menu movie clip has a stop action).

SPONSORED BY:
WebFusion
CONTACT SALES ON 0115 917 0000
OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK

Create pop-up windows in HTML

How to: Use JavaScript to create different kinds of browser windows, alert messages and dialog boxes

PROJECT 10
TUTORIAL

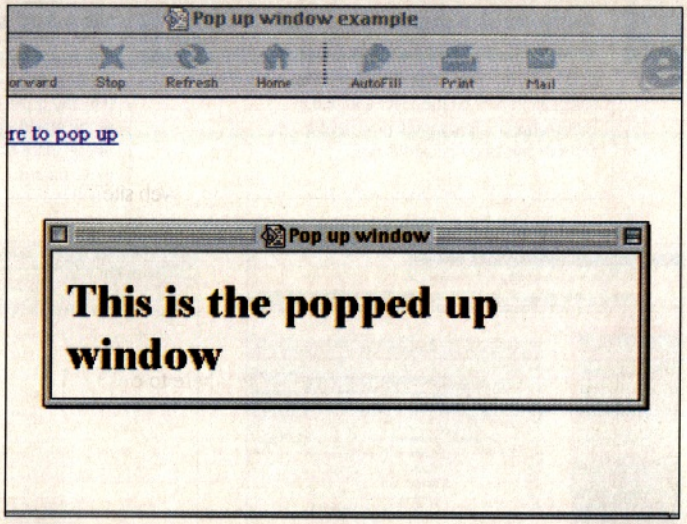
YOUR WEB PAGE doesn't have to be limited to just one browser window – it can easily break these boundaries with the addition of some simple JavaScript. This is a very flexible site-building tool, as scripts not only let you create a new browser window, but also allow its size and display options to be configured precisely. One thing to bear in mind is that users can quickly become very frustrated if you use too many of these techniques on your site – remember that everyone hates pop-up adverts! It's often best to only generate new windows or messages as a result of clicking on a link, or some other user-based trigger, rather than making them happen automatically.

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Pop up window example</title>
<script language="JavaScript">
<!--
function popwindow() {
window.open ('popup2.html', 'popupthing',
config='height=100, width=400, toolbar=no, menubar=no,
scrollbars=no, resizable=no, location=no, directories=no,
status=no')
}
-->
</script>
</head>
<body>
<a href="#" onClick="popwindow()">Click here to pop
up</a>
</body>
</html>
```

START HERE

1 Scripting and triggering a pop-up window

This code creates a link that generates a pop-up when clicked. The popping up is done with one long line of script beginning 'window.open'. In the brackets we specify the name of the HTML file to use, the name of the window, and its configuration. There are lots of options for the last item, experiment to see what's best for you. To activate an option, just change 'no' to 'yes', save the file, and reload it in your Web browser.



2 Pop-up window in action

You can see the result of the code from step one in the screenshot above. This is just one way of triggering the pop-up – you could alter the BODY tag to read <body onload="popwindow()"> to generate the pop-up window when the page loads, but you run the risk of the user closing it, thinking it's an advertisement. Be sure to avoid creating windows bigger than 600 pixels width or 450 pixels height, or it may be larger than some visitors' screens.

JARGON BUSTER

JavaScript
This is a widely supported way of making your Web pages more interactive and intelligent. Scripts are integrated invisibly into HTML code, and can also exist as separate files (ending with the extension .js). Whereas HTML code simply tells the Web browser what to display, scripts can do much more. They're the power behind many shopping carts, intelligent fill-in forms, animated graphics, and more.

Function
A section of JavaScript that is only executed when triggered or called from elsewhere on the Web page. Some of the examples here use functions, which are stored in the <head> section of the HTML file.

ONLINE RESOURCES

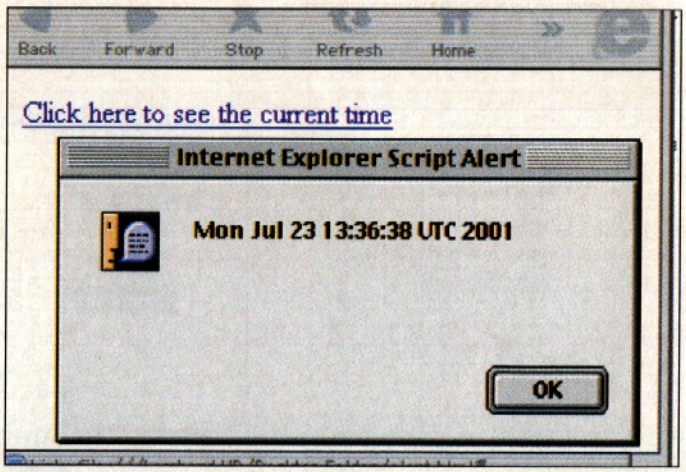
Earthweb JavaScripts
www.javascripts.com
The largest Javascripts repository online

JavaScript Mall
www.javascriptmall.com
Scores of free scripts and tutorials

Web Site Abstraction
www.wsabstract.com
Great place to find free scripts, applets and more

JavaScript Search
www.javascriptsearch.com
Find tutorials, articles amnd scripts here

JavaScript Knowledge Base
http://javascript.faqts.com
Superb place to find scripts and help



3 Creating an alert message

There are endless possibilities for the alert message –one of which is demonstrated above. The alert() command in JavaScript is very simple to invoke – all that you can see above was generated using the HTML code Click here to see the current time. Unfortunately there is no way to control what appears in the title bar or button of the alert window, unless you create a window with normal HTML.

SPONSORED BY:
WebFusion
CONTACT SALES ON 0115 917 0000
OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK

TOP TIPS!

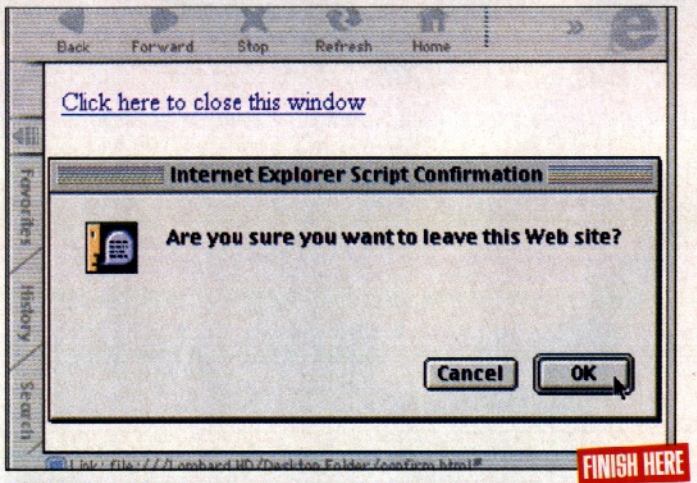
! To make the most of the techniques explained here, you might want to think how they can be integrated with other JavaScripts. For instance, you could add an alert message to a script which deals with fill-in form processing, as a proactive way of alerting users to there being a problem with the form.

! If you decide that you want all of the links on a page to load into a new window, this can easily be achieved by adding the code <base target="_blank"> to the <head> section of your HTML code. If you replace _blank with another name, all of the links will load into the same new window.

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Pop up window example</title>
<script language="JavaScript">
<!--
function closewindow() {
if (confirm("Are you sure you want to leave this Web site?")) {
window.close()
}
-->
</script>
</head>
<body>
<a href="#" onClick="closewindow()">Click here to close this window</a>
</body>
</html>
```

4 Confirming a script action

JavaScript can sometimes be too powerful, creating effects that were not intended by the Web site user. In order to avoid this, you can integrate confirmation dialog boxes into particularly high-impact scripting procedures. The code above generates a dialog box requesting user confirmation before closing the Web site browser window. If the 'OK' button is clicked, the script runs and the window is closed; the 'Cancel' button stops the window closure.

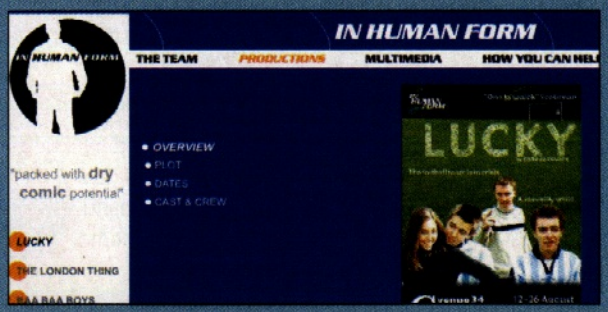


5 Adapting the confirmation dialog

The confirmation dialog can also do something when the user clicks the 'Cancel' button, simply add an 'else' element to your script. For instance, to generate an alert message just add this on a new line between the two brackets at the end of the script: else{alert("Window closure cancelled")}. Of course, this confirmation method can be adapted to any other JavaScript action, by simply replacing the 'window.close()' line.

POP-UP WINDOWS AND MESSAGES

TO GET A BETTER IDEA OF HOW YOU CAN USE POP-UP WINDOWS AND MESSAGES, HAVE A LOOK AT THESE THREE SITES FOR INSPIRATION. ALL USE THE TECHNIQUES DESCRIBED HERE IN DIFFERENT WAYS



In Human Form

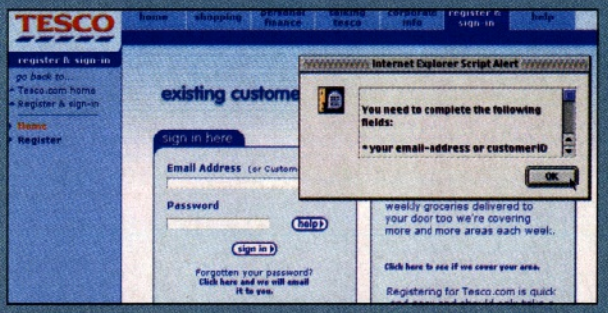
www.inhumanform.com

This Flash-based site generates a new browser window of a specified size when users enter the main page. The new window is configured so as not to display any of the normal browser features such as 'Back' and 'Stop' buttons or the Web page location, as none of them have much useful function when visiting a site based around Flash.

NewsNow

www.newsnow.co.uk

This site is based around providing external links to online sources of news. Every link generates a new window, which then redirects the user to the chosen story. The new window appears at a specific size, allowing the main NewsNow screen to remain visible and permitting the viewing of several stories in one browsing session.



Tesco

www.tesco.com

In order to access certain areas of the Tesco online shopping site, you need to log in as a registered user. This is done by filling in a form and clicking a button. If the user fails to fill in the form correctly, an message appears explaining the problem – this uses the alert() method explained in step three of the tutorial.

Practical Internet

YOUR HANDS-ON GUIDE TO USING THE NET

SOLVE ALL YOUR NET PROBLEMS WITH ONE SIMPLE PHONE CALL

- The *Practical Internet* helpline offers you expert advice when you need it most and for a fraction of what you'd expect it to cost.
- *Practical Internet's* expert helpline service can provide instant solutions on any of your Internet hardware and software problems. Whatever the problem, no matter how large or small, our team of dedicated experts are on hand to offer you instant help where you need it most, at home.

- **No Call Waiting**
  You only pay for the technical help you receive – there is no queuing system. So, in the unlikely event of the helpline being busy when you call up, you don't get connected and you don't even pay.
- **Limited Call Duration**
  If your problem is complicated and is going to take a long time to solve, you can leave it with our engineers and you can call us later for the solution.
- **Complete Money Back Guarantee**
  If you are not completely satisfied with the solution given to you by our engineers, fax us your complaint on **01753 755930** or call us on **0870 800 6155** and we will give you your money back.

For complete solutions to all your Internet software and hardware problems call us now on

0906 466 4487

HELPLINE OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK 8AM – 11PM

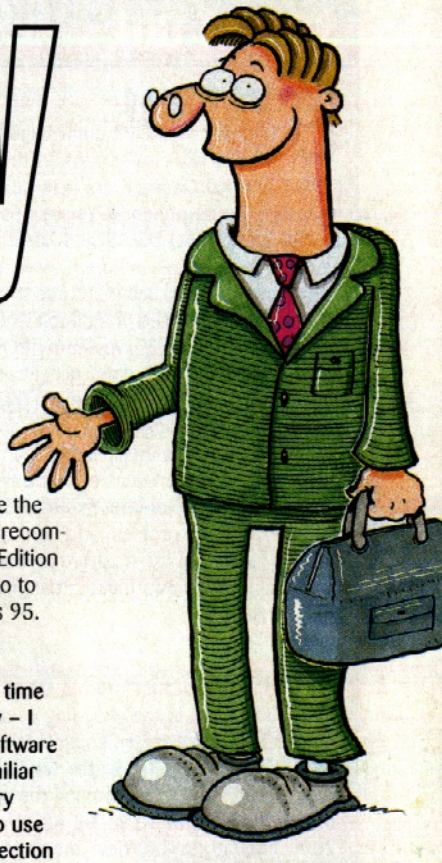
Please note that the *Practical Internet* helpline is not able to deal with faulty cover CD enquiries

OUR TEAM OF EXPERTS ARE WAITING TO HELP YOU!

Your call to the *Practical Internet* helpline is charged at £1.50 per minute (premium rate). Each call you make will show up on your standard telephone bill

NetSurgery

DON'T SHOUT AND SCREAM WHEN YOU SUFFER INTERNET PROBLEMS. GET HELP FROM OUR FRIENDLY EXPERT **CLIVE PARKER** INSTEAD – EMAIL HIM YOUR QUESTIONS AT **HELPDESK@PARAGON.CO.UK**

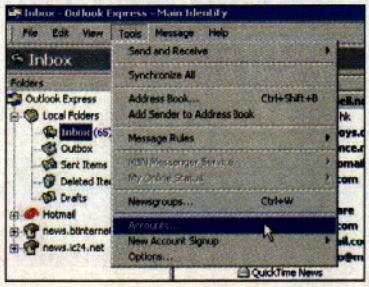


MULTIPLE ISPS

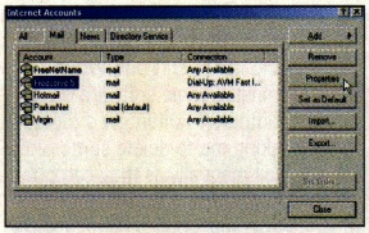
Q Having just used your free guide to solve some email problems, there is still one I can't resolve. I had Freeserve then installed Supanet. Although I receive email from both my Freeserve and Supanet email addresses, I can only send email from the Supanet account. Any idea why I can now no longer send from the Freeserve account? It was fine until I installed the Supanet software.

George Kesic

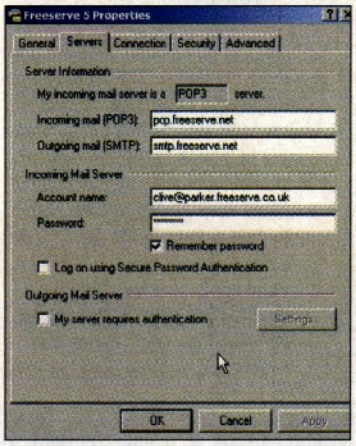
A Freeserve is one of the many UK Internet service providers that take a cut of the price of the phone call when you connect. So every time you log on to your Freeserve account the company gets a percentage of the phone cost from BT. To encourage its subscribers to dial in using their Freeserve accounts, the email system is set up so that you can only send email from your Freeserve account if you are actually connected to the Internet using your Freeserve dial-up number. I'm assuming you are connecting to Supanet when you experience this problem. Try connecting to Freeserve and then perform a send and receive with Outlook Express. If this still doesn't work, check your account settings to make sure that the outgoing (SMPT) server settings are correct; the correct server address is smtp.freeserve.net. Our steps show how to check your server details.



Open Outlook Express and go to the 'Tools' menu and select the 'Accounts' command



In the Internet Accounts window, click on your 'Freeserve' account in the list so it becomes highlighted then click on the 'Properties' button



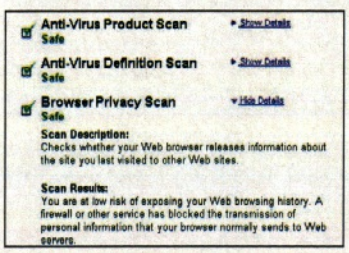
Click on the 'Servers' tab in the account Properties control panel and check the Outgoing Mail (SMTP) settings. If it does not say smtp.freeserve.net, modify it and click on the 'OK' button and exit from Internet Accounts

LEAKY BROWSER

Q I used the Symantec Web site at http://security.norton.com to analyse my Internet connection and possible vulnerabilities (as recommended on page 52 of *Practical Internet* 53). The report said that my browser (Internet Explorer 5.5) is leaking details of the last site I visited to Web servers; despite the fact that I am using the highly recommended ZoneAlarm Personal Edition firewall software. What can I do to stop this? I am using Windows 95.

Guy Pitchford

A Because I spend a lot of time online – too much really – I also have personal firewall software installed on my PCs. I am familiar with ZoneAlarm and it is a very good application, but I tend to use commercial software for protection because – in my experience – it comes with a printed manual and is usually more configurable than freeware or shareware. I use Norton Personal Firewall in tandem with Norton AntiVirus and I have never had any problems such as you describe with security. Norton Personal Firewall is extremely configurable and will prevent the problem you are suffering from. The latest versions of all Symantec's security and utility software require at least Windows 98 to run, but it's a good idea for you to upgrade in any event because Windows 98 SE or Windows Me will provide better Internet services for your PC. You can pick up Norton Internet Security from any software store such as Dixons, Game, Electronics Boutique or PC World for around £35. In my opinion, it's worth getting.



Go to the Norton Web site to check the security of your browser and Internet connection at http://security.norton.com

GET MORE FROM YOUR NET CONNECTION WITH THESE QUICK TIPS

If you access some of your favourite sites frequently, you can make them available for offline browsing. This means that the page will be saved locally on your PC and you will not need to connect to your ISP when you want to see it. To make a page available offline, position your mouse cursor over the 'favorite' and right click. Now, place the mouse cursor over 'Choose Make Available Offline' from the pop-up menu and left click. This saves your phone bills but will also mean that if the site is updated often you will not have the latest information. It's therefore best to save it to your hard disk frequently.

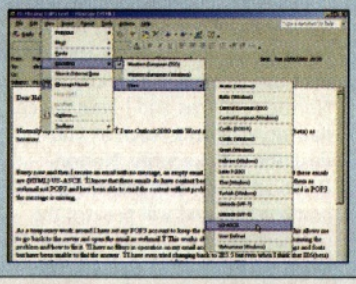
SORT IT OUT

ENCODING EMAIL

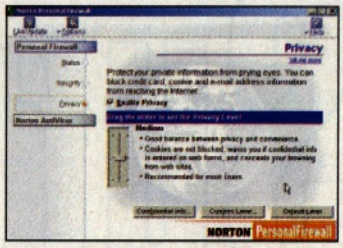
Q Normally my POP3 email works fine. I use Outlook 2000 with Word as my email editor, Windows 98 and Internet Explorer 6 (beta) as my browser. Every now and then I receive an email with no message, an empty email. I have noticed in the title bar that these emails are (HTML) US-ASCII. I know that these emails do have content because when I open them as Web mail instead of POP3 I have been able to read the content without problem. When the same email is opened in Outlook 2000 the message is missing. As a temporary solution I have set my POP3 account to keep the email on the server for one day. This allows me to go back to the server and open the email as Web mail. This works okay but I would like to know what is causing the problem and how to fix it. I have no filters in operation on my email account. I have tried changing settings and fonts but have been unable to find the answer. I have even tried changing back to Internet Explorer 5.5 but I don't think that Internet Explorer 6 is the problem and I am content to leave it on my PC until the full release of the program is available. I hope that I have supplied enough information that you may identify the problem. Many thanks

Martin Harrigan

A **I don't think that Internet Explorer 6 is your problem either. The clue is in the encoding of the email. You say that the header indicates that the email is in HTML format and encoded as US-ASCII. You can change the way Outlook 2000 and Outlook 2002 displays messages by changing the encoding on the message. Open one of your 'blank' HTML US-ASCII encoded emails in Outlook 2000. Now go to the 'View' menu of the message and select the 'Encoding' command. In the submenu that opens, select the 'More' command. In the final submenu, select the 'US-ASCII' command. Outlook 2000 will now display the message correctly.**



You can change the way Outlook 2000 and Outlook 2002 display messages by changing the encoding using the Encoding command in the View menu. This example uses Outlook 2002, but Outlook 2000 works in the same way



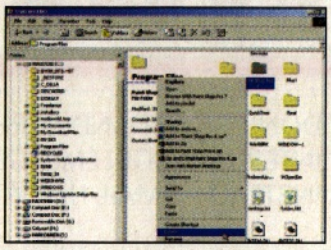
Norton Personal Firewall, part of its Internet Security application, enables you to customise the protection level of your connection

MANUAL DELETION

Q First of all, let me say thank you for all the advice and support. I started reading *Practical Internet* with issue 49 and I haven't missed an issue since. It is always packed with valuable info. I have a problem which I hope you can help me to sort out. When I uninstall some software on my computer, I often get a message asking me to delete some of the files manually as they can't be deleted using Add/Remove Programs control panel. I know that some of the files will be in the .ini folder, but where are the rest?

Magdi Dakroury

A **I think you are a little mixed up Magdi. The Add/Remove Programs control panel will remove any entries in the various .ini files along with any registry entries. Sometimes the control panel cannot delete files and folders within the Program Files directory (or wherever you install your applications). When you delete a program – Paint Shop Pro, for example – using the Add/Remove Programs control panel and you get the message about manually deleting files, use Windows Explorer and browse to C:\Program Files. Now delete the Paint Shop Pro folder by right-clicking on it and selecting the 'Delete' command from the pop-up menu.**



Use Windows Explorer to find the directory of the program you have uninstalled and then manually delete the folder

KERNEL BOGEY

Q Please help, my copy of Internet Explorer 5.5 frequently crashes giving me an error message referring to KERNEL32.DLL. Do you have any idea what's causing this, and how can I fix it?

Mark Smith

A **It sounds like the KERNEL32.DLL file has become corrupted in some way. You can try to fix this by reinstalling Internet Explorer 5.5 from a *Practical Internet* cover CD, or you can go to www.windrivers.com/dll/index.htm and download the KERNEL32.DLL file by clicking on the K button. Once you have downloaded and unzipped the file, copy it to c:\windows\system and**

BOOK REVIEWS

Sound and vision on your Web site

Shake up your site by adding some dynamic content

Author: Various
Publisher: Cassell & Co
Price: £3.99
URL: N/A
ISBN: 1-84202-084-6

FAIR ENOUGH, WYSIWYG Web editors are great for getting nice-looking sites with minimal fuss. With handy menus, draggable images and easy frames, its hard to go wrong. But when it comes to incorporating things you've seen on other sites and mixing them with your own ideas, that's when an understanding of Web design code is compulsory.

Part of the Little Internet guide series, this handy book sets out to give you a very broad understanding of Web programming. Topics such as JavaScript and DHTML are covered well, along with a neat little intro to Flash 4. Those who want to add buttons and interactive forms to their site, will find this book useful and may even tempt you to go and buy more books on the individual topics.

While a basic grasp of HTML is pretty much essential when reading this title, the author succeeds in easing the reader through the main keys and concepts of programming, allowing them to take other people's sites apart to use in their own way.

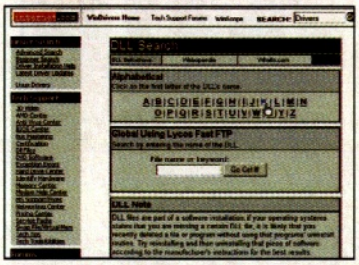
THE VERDICT

What's good:
Very educational covering a wide range of issues. Fits in your inside pocket!

What's bad?:
Wide variety of topics tempts you to buy loads of books!

Overall ★★★★★

then reboot your PC. This should solve the problem.



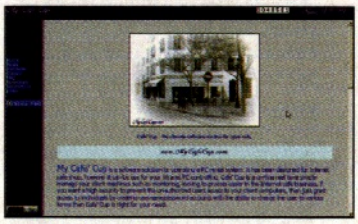
One of the easiest ways to get replacement files for your operating system is to download them from www.windrivers.com

CAFÉ CULTURE

Q Dear Clive Parker, I have just opened a cyber café here in Nigeria and I use special software called My Café Cup to prevent users from accessing the PCs. The program is freeware available from **www.mycafecup.com** and it is used by most cyber cafés use here in Nigeria. Do you know if there is there any other similar café software better than My Café Cup that is also free?

Tayo Muritala

A **I've had a look around the Web and I have been unable to find any other freeware software that offers similar functions and features to My Café Cup. I have found a couple of commercial products: Café Manager from ViBersoft at www.vibersoft.com. The Pro version costs $390 and the Light version costs $190. Another commercial offering is Cyber Café Pro from www.cybercafepro.com. This is more expensive and starts at $299 for five PCs. For a range of shareware products type in this URL – http://32bit.com/pages/search.php3?submit=Go&search=Internet+café**



My Café Cup is an excellent Internet café management system. And there's a free version

FREE STUFF

Q Could you please advise me on recommended form handlers for my CGI bin and where I can obtain them – preferably free of charge?

Mike Harris

A **There's loads of free stuff on the Web for you to peruse and download, and CGI scripts are no exception. Probably the most used Perl form is FormMail.pl by Matthew Wright, it's used by all kinds of businesses including multinationals. You can find Matt's Script Archive at www.worldwidemart.com/scripts and there are links to many other resources on the Web.**

MAXIMISED WINDOW SOLUTION

Q In the Net Surgery section of *Practical Internet* issue 54, page 120, Christine Leggett described an annoying window problem where a maximised window would appear locked in place, partly off-screen in Internet Explorer 5.5. Here's an alternative to your home page solution that doesn't always work. The only detailed solution I have found involves removing the window position data from the Registry.

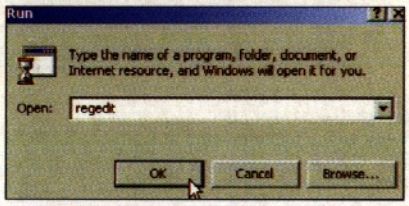
Run Regedit and remove the following registry key values – just the values Window_Placement and OldWorkAreaRects

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Main\Window_Placement

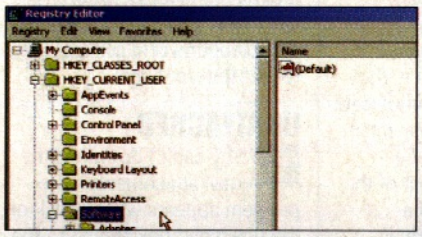
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Desktop\Explorer\Desktop\Old WorkAreas\OldWorkAreaRects

Alistair GD

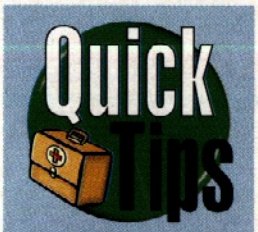
A **Thanks Alistair. I'm not a fan of sending people into the Registry willy-nilly but in this case it's the best solution. Remember, you edit the registry at your own risk. Follow the steps below:**



Go to the 'Start' menu and select the 'Run...' command. When the Run window opens, type regedit into the text field and click the 'OK' button



When the Registry Editor opens, click on the plus sign next to the HKEY_CURRENT_USER directory and then select the 'Software' folder



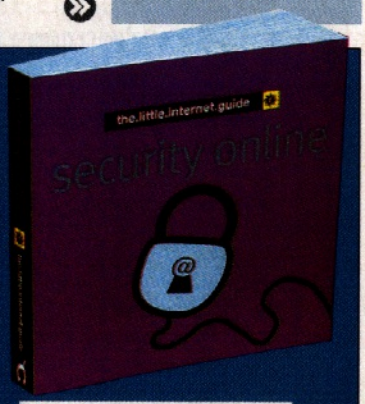
GET MORE FROM YOUR NET CONNECTION WITH THESE QUICK TIPS

Looking for a smarter way to search online? Try Vivisimo at **http://vivisimo.com/**. The software calls other search engines – like Yahoo! and MSN – extracts the relevant information (titles, URLs, and short descriptions) and groups it based on this summarized information. The output is a clear and hierarchical folder structure, allowing users to avoid 'link overload' and to click only on the specific category of information that they need.

The cache is an area of temporary memory on your hard disk where Explorer stores temporary Internet files. These are transferred to your PC when you request a Web page. To clear the cache (and destroy evidence of the sites you've been visiting) open the Internet Options window and click the General tab. Position the mouse over the Delete Files button in the Temporary Internet files section to clear the cache.

Security online

How to ensure your privacy and reduce risk online



Author: Various
Publisher: Cassell & Co
Price: £3.99
URL: N/A
ISBN: 1-84202-083-8

ONLINE SECURITY IS something that we can easily forget about. When you're happily browsing away and sending emails, it's easy to forget about problems that could arise. However, this book will draw you into a world of PGP, private keys, encryption and cryptography. It has a nice little intro that certainly makes you more aware of security issues and scares you into protecting yourself! There are some great guides inside too, explaining things such as how to send encrypted emails, managing PGP keys and how to configure your Web browser for safe online browsing.

If you aren't already clued up on Internet security, but know just enough to be concerned, this book will educate you on how to protect yourself.

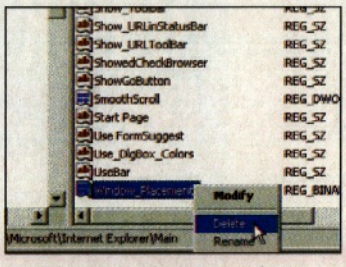
With the huge range of information on the Web, it's often hard to choose what to listen to and what to disregard. This book contains a nice selection of ideas all in one place and priced at a mere £3.99, it's an investment for all paranoid browsers.

THE VERDICT

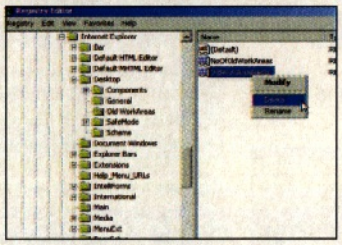
What's good:
Covers an important subject in an understandable way

What's bad?:
Would have been nice to have at least mentioned other computer platforms

Overall ★★★★★



Scroll down the list of software manufacturers until you find the Microsoft folder. Open it and scroll down until you find Internet Explorer. Open the Internet Explorer folder and click on the 'Main' directory. In the right-hand pane, scroll down until you find the Window_Placement key. Right-click on it and select 'Delete' from the pop-up menu



Now open the Desktop folder in Internet Explorer and click on the 'Old WorkAreas' directory. In the right-hand pane of the Registry Editor, right-click on the 'OldWorkAreasRects' key and select 'Delete' from the pop-up menu

GETTING TECHNICAL

Q My company has finally decided to 'go technical' and get email addresses for everyone, about ten people altogether. They want us to be able to communicate with our sister company via email and therefore we need to be connected to a server most of the day. Can you recommend a reliable provider? Obviously I expect to be charged but the more reasonable the better. I use BT Anytime at home but I don't think this is suitable for a business. What do you recommend?

Esther Emery

A I'm assuming your company doesn't have its own Internet domain or email system, although that doesn't make much difference. For business you need a reliable connection with a recognised ISP. You should also consider a fast connection such as ISDN or ADSL, although whether you can get ADSL depends on if BT has upgraded your local exchange and whether your business is within three kilometres of the exchange. If ADSL is available from BT Openworld, opt for it. The Business 500 package costs £129.99 per quarter and there's a £150 installation fee. This gives you 'always on' access and 10 email accounts – although you can access other email accounts through the system if your company has its own mail server. Your office IT manager should be able to link the other PCs to the ADSL connected machine to route emails. Alternatively combine an ISDN connection with a BT Internet Anytime account, that's the

BT Openworld has a selection of ADSL business solutions as long as you are in the supported area

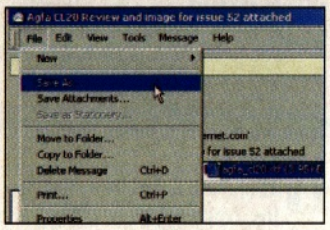
system I use at home and I find it's very fast and efficient. It costs me £40 per month for the ISDN line plus two standard phone lines and £14.99 per month for the BT Internet Anytime account. Get more information from **www.btopenworld.com** or **www.btInternet.com**.

UNATTACHED

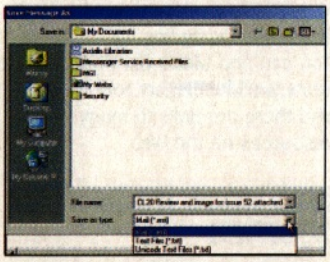
Q Why can't I download my email attachments? The problem appears when I click on the download box and go to the download 'save as' file selector box. When in this file selector box the file name field displays the file name as 'getmsg' instead of the actual attachment file name of FC12-05-01.exe, and where it says 'save as type' it says HTML document. When I tried to download the same attachment at a friends house on his PC it downloaded without any problem.

Kevin Richardson

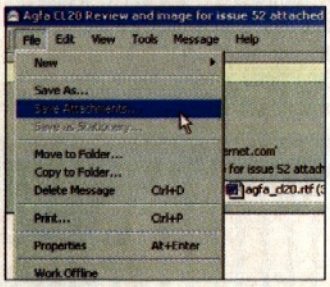
A From your description it sounds as though you are saving the email message rather than the attached file even though you have clicked on the attachment and highlighted it. It sounds as though you have then gone to the File menu of Outlook Express and selected the Save As command. Because the email sent to you was in HTML format the 'save as type' is coming up as HTML. But it's easy to remedy. Don't bother using the Save As command in the file menu. Instead, use the Save Attachments command. This will open a box that displays the attachment (or attachments) and by clicking the Browse button you can determine exactly where you save the files on your hard drive. See the four steps below for more details.



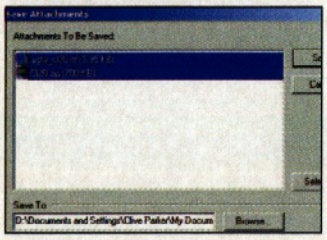
This is probably where you are going wrong, selecting the attached file in the message and then using the Save As command in the File menu



This enables you to save the text of the message to your hard drive in various formats, in this case as an email file (.eml) or as two kinds of text file. If the message was in HTML, this would also be an option when saving



Instead of highlighting the attachment and using the Save As command in the File menu, use the Save Attachments command instead



This opens the Save Attachments box that displays the files to be saved and enables you to choose where to save them using the Browse button. Use the Save button to save the attachments to your hard drive

Site b

STICKING TO STANDARDS

Q I am writing a simple text-based site, using MS Write. It uses tables and external style sheets and works fine, but aspects of the style sheets trouble me. Can you possibly recommend any style sheet or HTML validators which will work on a site which has not been uploaded?

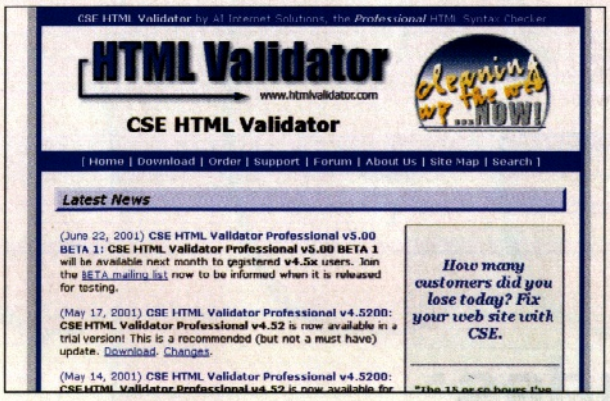
David Edwards

A The best validation service to use is that provided by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), who is in charge of setting the standards of the Web including the HTML and CSS (Cascading Style Sheet) specifications. To validate a Web page using this service, go to **http://validator.w3.org**. You can then upload the files that need checking, or alternatively provide a Web address to check. The second option is preferable, even if the site is not online in a public way – as it will avoid time-consuming uploading of multiple files. You should put the draft site online in a sub-directory of your main site and point the validator at it – that way you can test it online without granting public access to the site. If you're determined to use a software solution to check your HTML, take a look at **www.htmlvalidator.com** for details of one useful package;

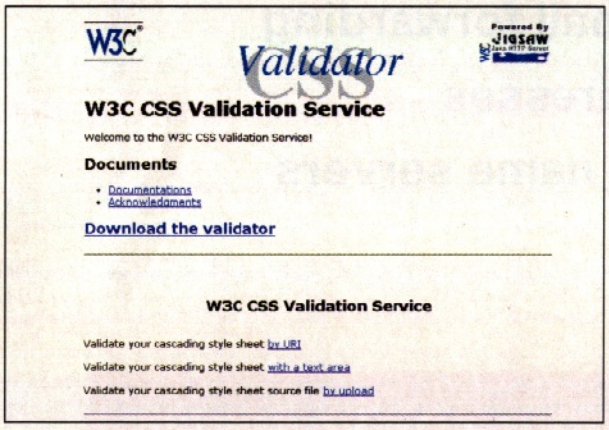
Coffee Cup's impressive software range includes a stylesheet maker and checker

uildingQ&A

JAMES SEABRIGHT ANSWERS SITE BUILDING QUERIES. EMAIL HIM AT JAMES@PARAGON.CO.UK



The official, original and probably best HTML page checker you'll find is at ***http://validator.w3.org***



You can check out your stylesheets against the latest official specification by visiting the W3C CSS validator

many others are available for download from the usual sources such as **www.download.com**.

As for fixing troublesome style sheets, you can get assistance in ironing out problems by visiting the W3C CSS validator at **http://jigsaw.w3.org/css-validator**. Although it is normally possible to get a free offline version of that validator, this was not available for download at the time of writing. Various other software options are available – including the excellent Coffee Cup Stylesheet Maker at **www.coffeecup.com/style**.

GHOSTLY WEB PAGES

Q Here's one that has me foxed. My site at **www.intergiftcornwall.co.uk** is a tourist's photo introduction to the Padstow area of Cornwall. Over the years it has been redesigned, including the recent removal of an online shopping part of the site. This week we received a postal order for an item using the order form from the old site. It turned out the customer had found the page by doing a Google search. How can this be? These pages, which should not be there, seem to be floating around like orphans in hyperspace!

Terry Butcher

A It sounds like your site redesign failed to delete old pages from wherever they were being stored. If you used an external eCommerce site creator, it may well be that its server still holds the site pages and will occasionally get linked to by search engines who have recorded the page into their database. If you want to stop this from happening, you may need to contact the site hosting company and ask it to remove the site themselves or forward any incoming visitors to your new site. In the event that you were hosting the pages on your own Web server, it is not enough to just remove links to the pages – you actually have to delete them in order to stop this sort of thing happening. This can be done easily from within a File Transfer Protocol (FTP) program such as WSFTP or CuteFTP. If the site used CGI scripts, you will need to delete the relevant script files from the CGI directory of your server – which is normally called cgi or cgi-bin.

When redesigning sites, it's generally a good idea to remember that search engines take time to update their database. This means that if Web page file names change with a redesign, potential visitors may get put off by 'file not found' messages. Your best bet is to design a standard redirection page and then to

DESIGN DOCTOR

SHARED LOYALTIES

WWW.SHAREDLOYALTIES.CO.UK

It's interesting to see all kinds of different groups presenting themselves to the world via the Internet, and this is certainly the first share club site that the Design Doctor has come across. Others with an interest in the investment field may well be very interested to see where share clubs are investing their collective monies, and this site already does a good job of representing Shared Loyalties online. Of course, a few simple changes would make the site a great deal more presentable and accessible…

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Graphics on the site are somewhat larger than they need be, making life particularly difficult for people with small screens. This also means that most people have to scroll in order to see the full list of navigation menu options and pages on the site in general. When reducing image sizes, it would also be good to use transparency colours to avoid the ugly white backgrounds of the main links menu.

FRONT PAGE NEWS

Regular visitors to a site will always want to know what the most recent updates have been. First time visitors will also be impressed by seeing that a site has been regularly maintained. So, it makes sense for all visitors' interests to move the 'News' page of the site to be part of the main front page.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Presenting up-to-date information on the site is a great idea, but it would surely be more useful to show users a list of share prices rather than presenting them on individual pages? Obviously this is tricky as the ticker information appears as a big graphic – maybe an alternative data source could be found that uses smaller images or text-based price details.

123-reg.co.uk

Reserve your .biz, .name, .eu and .info domain name on-line now!

It's never been easier or cheaper to have your own domain name

*39p

Stunning price includes:

- Web forwarding • Catch-all e-mail forwarding
- Up to 100 e-mail forwarding addresses
- Holding page wizard • Change name servers
- Change IPS tags (UK domains)
- Full domain management

CHECK IT OUT FOR YOURSELF

123-reg.co.uk

* +registration fee: £2.50 per year. US domains: £2.29
+ registration fee: £6.70 per year. Prices exclude VAT

part of the Host Europe group of companies

OUR PROMISE TO YOU... Ours are the lowest prices in the world. We don't charge a transfer fee and we'll give you double the difference back if you find a cheaper price anywhere else.**

**See website for full terms

Site building Q&A

use that file in place of any old pages that are not used in the new site design. The redirection page could be as simple as a single link to the main page of the new site, or it could be a more comprehensive index of the new site. To automatically forward visitors to another location, create a page containing a simple message and then add an adapted version of this HTML code to the <head> section of your page: <META http-equiv="refresh" content="5;URL=http://www.somewhere.com/">.

SCREENSHOT SHOWDOWN

Q To copy a Web page to your clipboard, I have heard that you should use the 'Print Scr' button. Could you please tell me exactly what this does, and is it possible for me to take a picture of the screen in any other way?

Jens Rothenborg

A PCs running Windows will take a screenshot of everything on your monitor when you press 'Print Screen', not just the Web page you are viewing at that moment. The image is placed in the clipboard, allowing you to select 'Paste' from the 'Edit' menu in a graphics package in order to save the image into a file for later use. If you want to be more specific about the area of the screen that features in the screenshot, you need to take the screenshot using an additional package such as Paint Shop Pro, available in free trial format from **www.jasc.com**. That software has a very flexible screen capture facility, allowing multiple captures to be taken without switching back to Paint Shop between each one, and also permitting the user to set the area captured in the picture from a range of options. Of course, you can edit screenshots taken in the conventional way using even a simple package like Paint, the graphic editor built into Windows.

If you want to actually save a Web page for offline reference, it is possible to do this in any browser using the 'Save' option in the 'File' menu. Internet Explorer users can select to save a page in 'Web Archive' format, which will mean that all the pictures and other content on the page will be saved in one file with the text. Users of other browsers will just be saving the text or HTML code itself, which may not be of use if the visual element of the page is of more interest.

THE NEED FOR SPEED

Q Having slaved over a hot Web page editor for many long weekends, it's frustrating to hear that friends have found my site very slow to load. How can I make things a little quicker off the mark?

Hatty Miller

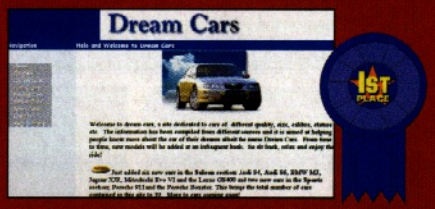
A Even in these days of high speed modems, it is vital to remember that many users are still connected to the Net by slow links, and that at peak times it's difficult to successfully move around graphic-heavy sites. As such, graphics are always the greatest area of concern, because most sites use too many large images. It is possible to cut down on the total number of images a site has quite easily. For example, if you have a navigation system based on graphical buttons, then you can merge them all into one large image file, and use an imagemap to create links to other pages.

As far as graphic size is concerned, remember that some Web browser windows are only 600 pixels wide, so you should never use a graphic wider than 550 pixels. Also, when using GIF format images, it is possible to reduce the size of the colour table to save on file space. This can be done automatically using GIF Wizard at **www.gifwizard.com**. If your image is in JPEG format, then try increasing the compression ratio to a higher level – but remember that more compression means less image quality. As a general point, it's a good idea to provide users with thumbnails (small previews) of any particularly large images on your site, so they can decide whether it's worth downloading the full sized image.

Aside from graphics, a key element in site speed is the means of navigation used on your site. If you use frames, then the navigational elements can remain constant throughout and this will save time as the visitor's computer doesn't have to keep on reloading the same navigation images every time they go to a different page. Try and always make your pages so they can be completely downloaded in 30 seconds. Any longer than that, the user will probably get bored and go elsewhere.

READERS' SITES

MAKE YOUR SITE IMMORTAL – SEND THE URL TO JAMES@PARAGON.CO.UK



Dream Cars

Site creator: Nsabasi Etteh

URL: www.members.tripod.co.uk/thedreamcars

Comment: This site combines information and appealing design, providing a valuable resource for anyone wanting to drool over expensive cars. Ease of navigation could be improved by building the drop down menus into the main menu system, rather than on separate pages. And we could do without the gratuitous world time menu bar clock!

Petra

Site creator: Dan Abbey

URL: www.angelfire.com/rock2/petra1/index.html

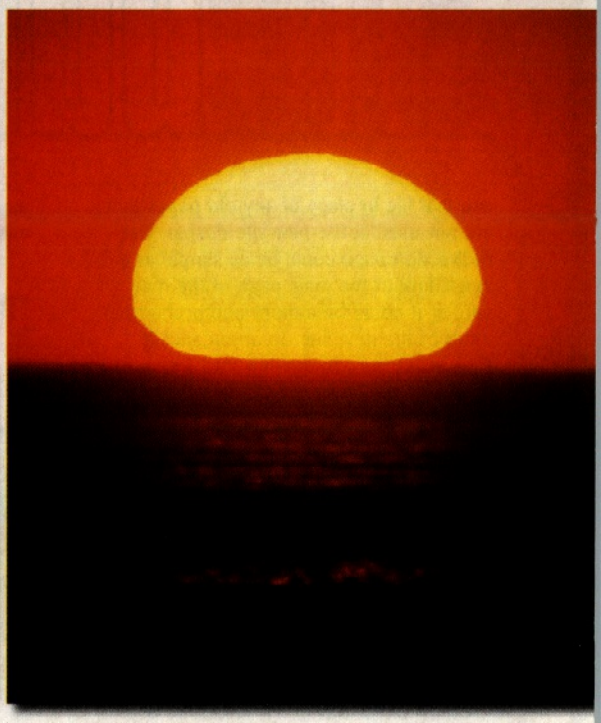
Comment: This fan site for a religiously-oriented rock band is a great tribute to its designer and the musicians it promotes. A wide range of links lead to the sections, all laid out in a strong house style. The overall number of images could probably be reduced, but that's easily enough achieved.

Keith's Site

Site creator: Keith

URL: www.keithssite.co.uk

Comment: This home page has been put together around a great navigation system, which is consistently reproduced across the site's various sections. Unfortunately, it is a little lacking in content that will be of interest to anyone other than the mysterious Keith.



HOW WE BUILT The Met Office

The forecast is sunny for the Met Office after a spanking redesign. **Thomas Watson** talks to the man behind the changes, Jim Ephraums

The design process of any site in the world, from the largest multinational conglomerate's online presence to your Uncle Charlie's home page, goes through the same steps. With each step, more intense choices and dilemmas enter the head of the designer. And considering that it's the designer's head that rests on the block, taking punishment for wrong decisions, the utmost care has to be taken at all times.

The look and feel of a site can take many different routes down the long road that is Web design. At some point, though, a choice has to be made as to the general direction and aim of the site. Like the most effective journeys, the quicker you can choose a definite route, the better.

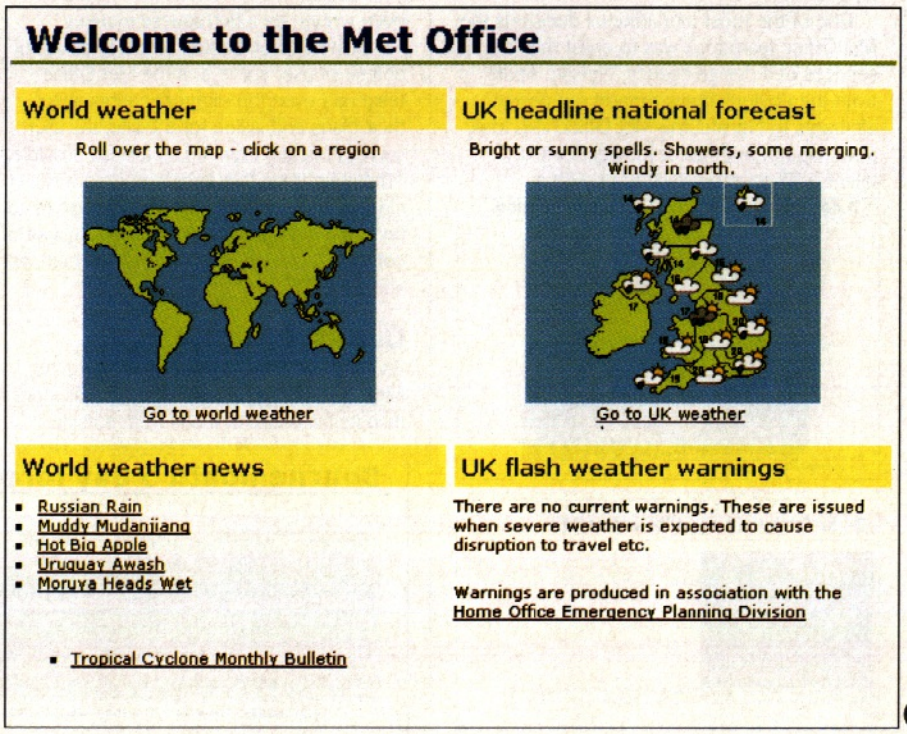
When Jim Ephraums, Head of Product Development at the Met Office, and his crew came to plan for the refurbished and revamped site, there was one leitmotif running through all of the initial discussions. "For us, it was speed, speed, speed," admits Ephraums. "We had to avoid being overtaken by nice ideas, and instead focus on providing content to people in a way that was fast and accessible."

While it's all too easy to fall into the 'more is better' trap, the team at the Met Office had to quickly accept that most people don't visit the site to view a collection of beautifully designed vistas and ultra-modern page designs. It doesn't take a person of great brain to realise that the majority of punters at the Met Office site are there first and foremost to see a weather forecast. "People visit the site for their local weather. For a lot of people, it's about getting in and out quickly," comments Ephraums.

Spring cleaning

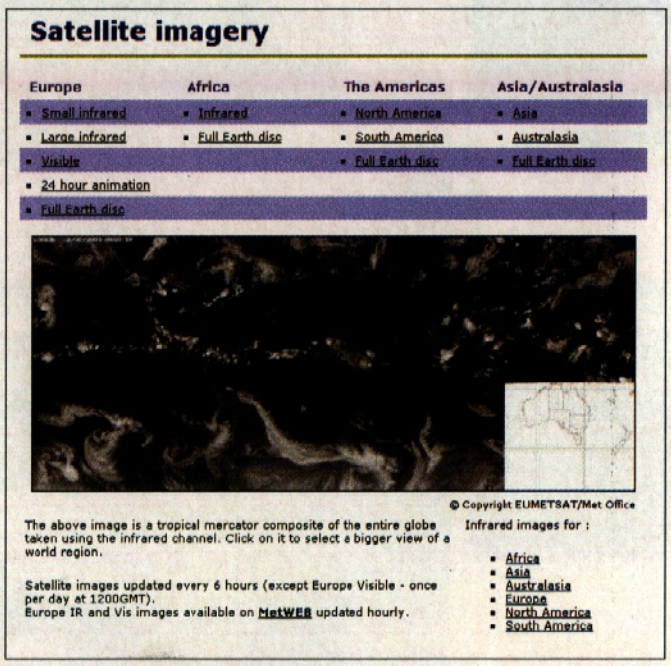
Originally created in October 1995, the Met Office site was given a facelift in 1998. This was essentially a "paint job", though, so when the latest revamp was mooted, the plans were for far more progressive and radical transformations. The underlying cause of the redesign was simply that the Met Office was in the process of rebranding itself, meaning the site had to follow suit. Having decided to completely alter the Web site in the Spring of last year, the team was set the somewhat ominous sounding deadline of 13 November to complete the work.

"The site itself needed restructuring anyway to move forward. The old site had grown, bits being added on with no thought of the structure," says Ephraums. So, a shift in



TIME SCALE

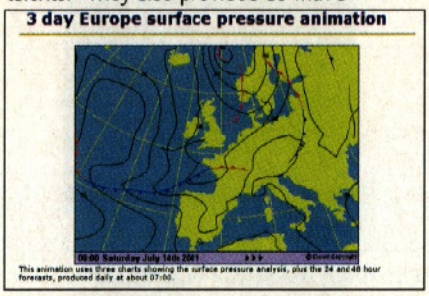
- **October 1995** – The original Met Office site is launched
- **1998** – A minor redesign is undertaken, involving various tweaks to bring it up-to-date
- **March 2000** – A more dramatic redesign is mooted
- **November 2000** – The deadline for work on the site, which is met by the team



company policy provided the perfect opportunity to bring the Web site slap bang up-to-date. And Ephraums himself confesses to the odd negative view of the burgeoning Internet world. "The Internet is not cheap. Once you're in it, you're stuck on it for the long term."

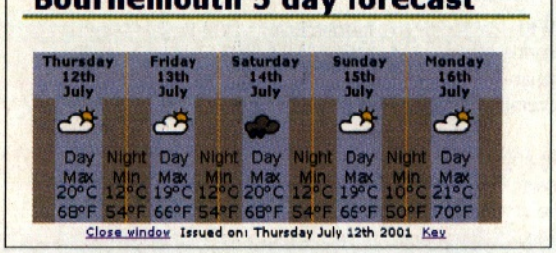
One of the most fundamental decisions the Met Office team took was to enlist the services of a design agency, Netsite. Apart from the obvious move to farm out design elements to Netsite, the Met Office also took advantage of another of the agency's key talents. "They also provided us with a copywriter, who went through the text and told us how to make it more punchy." Often the most overlooked element of Web design, this shows the importance of the text on your pages. It makes no difference whatsoever how sharp, compact and seemingly effective your design is if the words look as if they've been written by a Portuguese monkey.

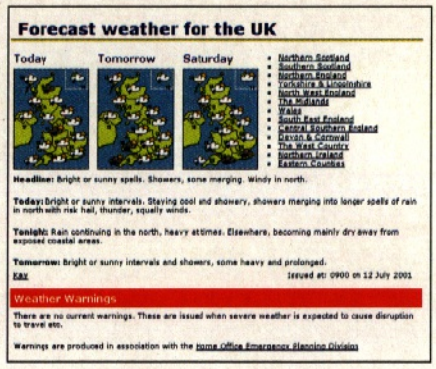
Netsite also embarked on the ever useful course of user surveys. If the Met Office team had even the slightest doubts about their plans and vision for the site, the user surveys backed them up as fully as possible. "The main thing that people wanted was a clean and welcoming site. This allowed us to fine-tune our ideas towards providing a lot of content to people in a way that was both fast and accessible."



Outside influence

As you can imagine, a site devoted to the latest weather news and forecasts has more than its fair share of feeds from outside.

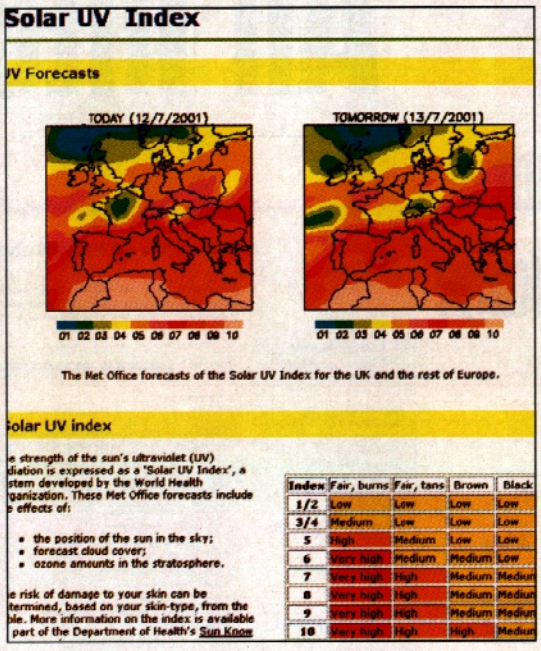


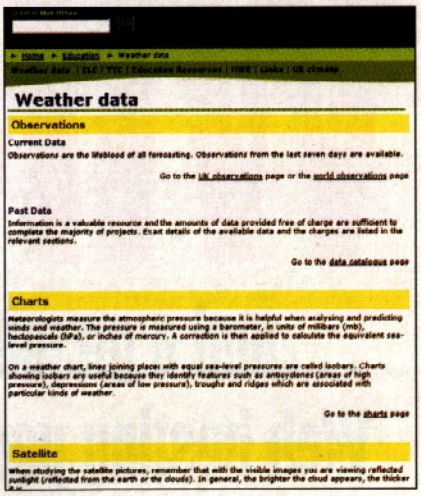


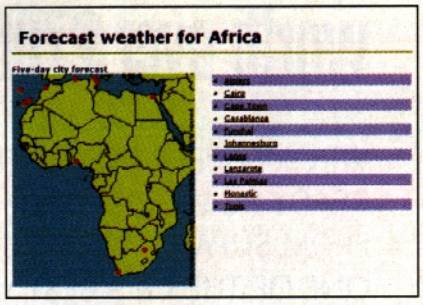
Considering there are somewhere in the region of 5,000 pages on the site, it comes as no surprise to hear Jim Ephraums state that "there is no live editorial activity on the site on a day to day basis. Nearly all of the changes are automatic." The challenge for the Met Office crew is to make sure that all of the information being fed in is the right format. Pages that rely on live data are created using Perl scripts. "Typically, we might have a data feed from Aberdeen, and one from our main supercomputer. The challenge for us is to somehow provide a better environment to manage this."

Surprisingly, though, the team at the Met Office found that there was no need to call on the oft-

THE BBC AND ZOOM'S WEATHER PAGES CONTAIN CONTENT PROVIDED BY THE MET OFFICE







adored Content Management System. "We looked at CMSs, but we were worried because people were talking about lots of money," admits Ephraums. "At the moment, we're using a software configuration tool. Our system is much more about checking that we're using the right hardware and software." The system is simple – satellite pictures are fed into the site, which then creates a new page as necessary. So simple, in fact, that you can certainly appreciate Ephraums' opinion that "the jury's out on CMSs".

With simplicity a key tenet, flashy Flash extras were never likely to feature high on the Met Office shopping list. "We will always provide a core content in the lowest common denominator," states Ephraums. While we've grown accustomed to that term referring to the most banal and thoughtless of television output, the need to make your site available to the masses is less a question of quality than accessibility. According to Ephraums, "Flash is an optional extra".

Bandying Flash about like it's going out of fashion would cause all manner of problems to an up-to-the-minute site like the Met Office's. The prospect of integrating Flash data with information that's being updated constantly would cause palpitations to any site designer. "We were worried about creating a site in Flash that would be modified by dynamic data daily," admits Jim Ephraums.

"We've got an area on the site that uses Flash to demo our WAP service. I think it's worthwhile if you want to explain something complicated. More than anything, though, we wanted to avoid the dreaded 'skip intro' syndrome. Why make visitors sit through the wait?"

Sunny outlook

What with the weather being a subject that every punter in the world has an interest in, the Met Office faces a fair amount of competition. "There's simply no point in us trying to be the only weather site in the UK," says Ephraums, acknowledging the vast array of sources available to people to discern the latest weather news. "At the end of the day, it's up to the user. We just try to differentiate ourselves from elsewhere." The situation for the Met Office is far from conventional, though.

You see, many of the weather sites in the UK feature content fed from none other than the Met Office. "The BBC is a great site, with Met Office content. In one sense it's a rival. In another, we're proud of our part in it." This double-edged sword allows the Met Office to monitor its success both on the achievements of its own site and of its rivals.

Having just launched an ITV weather site, Ephraums maintains that the Met Office simply cannot fail to gain from such a coupling. "They have access to airtime to promote their site, which we could never do. They can also link their site to all of their TV broadcasts. After all, we get links from the BBC site to our own. When all is said and done, it's a win-win situation for us." □

THE SITE'S STATS

The site
Met Office www.metoffice.com

Who designed it?
Mixture of In-house + Netsite design agency

Time taken?
Seven months

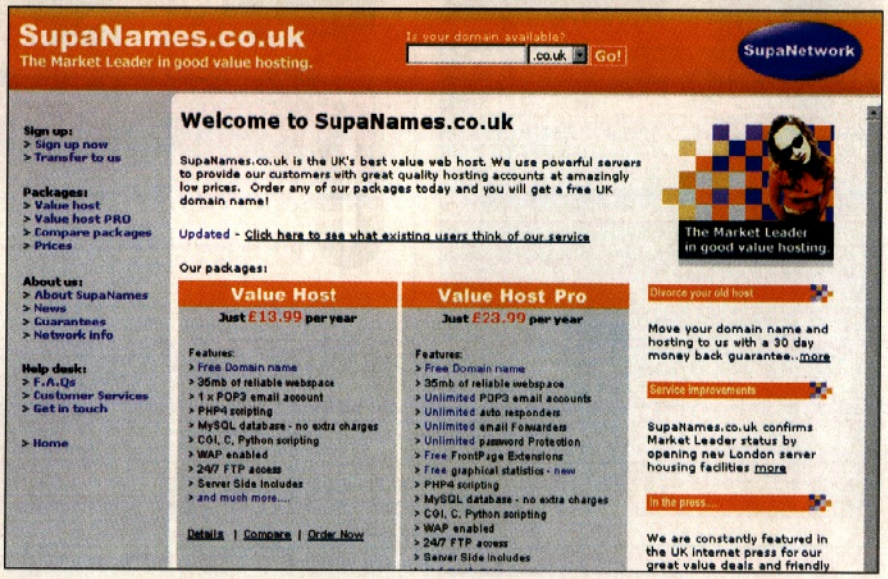
How many people involved?
Thirteen at the Met Office

Software?
Dreamweaver 4. Perl

WIN! An Internet PC

...and a premium Web hosting package worth over £700

WIN A SUPERB INTERNET-READY PC WORTH OVER £700 FROM **SUPANAMES.CO.UK** – ONE OF THE UK'S BEST VALUE WEB HOSTS



Internet PC competition entry form

To win an Internet-ready PC worth over £700, read this page and then answer the easy question below:
How much Web space is provided with SupaNames.co.uk's Value Host Pro Web hosting package?

a) 3.5Mb
b) 25Mb
c) 35Mb

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....Postcode.....

Daytime phone.....

Email.....

Rules: Employees of Paragon Publishing Ltd, SupaNames.co.uk, their agents, wholesalers or retailers and/or relations may not participate. Participants must be over 18 years of age and resident in the United Kingdom. The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. There is no cash alternative to any prize offered. Proof of postage cannot be accepted as proof of delivery and no responsibility can be accepted for lost, delayed or damaged entries. Photocopied or altered entries will be disqualified. The closing date for this competition is 19 September, 2001.

From time to time, Paragon Publishing Ltd sends out news about new products and opportunities that are of interest to our readers. If you do not wish to receive such information, please tick this box ☐

One lucky reader will win a great PC with the following spec: Intel 700MHz, 128Mb RAM; 17-inch monitor; Midi Tower Case; 20Gb hard disk drive; 56K modem; 52x CD-ROM; on-board graphics; on-board Sound Blaster stereosound; Floppy drive; Genius comfy keyboard and Genius PC mouse. The PC will come fully loaded with Windows 98.

Also included is 24 months use of one of SupaNames.co.uk's highly renowned Value Host Pro Web hosting packages (normally worth £34.99/year + VAT) with the following features: a choice of domain name; 35Mb of UK-based Web space; free account and virtual server setup; unlimited POP3 email accounts; unlimited email forwarders; unlimited auto responders; unlimited multiple recipient addresses; unlimited password protected directories; Microsoft FrontPage server extensions; graphical statistics; disk space and bandwidth summary system; PHP4 scripting support; MySQL databases with Online Control panel; CGI scripting support in Perl; C & Python; Pre-installed CGI scripts; WAP-enabled server; Server Side Includes (SSI); 24-hour FTP access; unlimited visitor bandwidth; online account manager system; certificate for your records; expert technical support via email; and lots more.

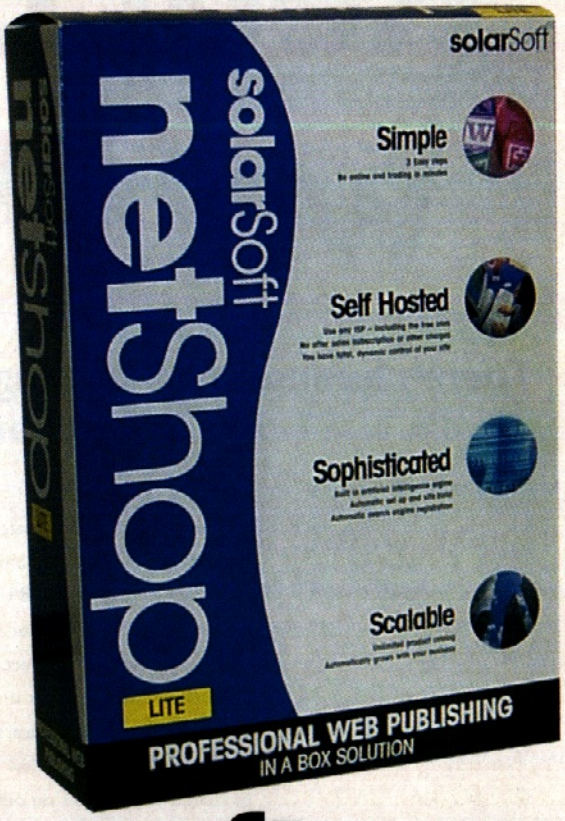
SupaNames.co.uk is a UK-based low cost Web host providing excellent value high quality hosting accounts to thousands of customers all around the world. The company provides everything necessary to develop a cost-effective Web presence.

Full 35Mb Web hosting packages start at the low price of just £13.99 + VAT per year with a free UK domain name included. Visit **www.supanames.co.uk** to check out the full range of packages available.

HOW TO ENTER

EMAIL YOUR ANSWER to the question on the left to **pi@paragon.co.uk** with the heading 'Internet PC' or send it on a postcard to: Internet PC Competition, *Practical Internet*, Paragon House, St Peter's Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2JS to reach us no later than 19 September, 2001. Please include your name, address and daytime telephone number.

WIN! £3,000 of eCommerce software



Thinking of setting up your own online store and need some software to get you started? This month, we're giving away six copies of one of the most powerful and easiest-to-use eCommerce packages on the market.

SolarSoft netShop (**www.solarsoft.uk.com**) costs £499 including VAT and helps small to medium-sized enterprises with no technical expertise create sophisticated sites and secure backend e-tailing solution in less than an hour.

Through a series of command screens and a choice of hundreds of different templates, the user can build a world class customised site and generate an online trading facility, which is scalable and supports multi-currencies.

SolarSoft empowered eCommerce sites work with any ISP, including the free ones, and unlike competitive products, many of which cost thousands of pounds, there are no recurring subscription or hosting fees. All the user needs is an Internet-enabled PC and Web space.

Because netShop does not use 'active server technology', SolarSoft claims it can reduce the 'click-and-drop' rate by around 75%. Click-and-drop refers to customers who begin to make a purchase, but cancel the session before ordering, usually because the process takes too long.

Many large e-tailers admit to losing 2 out of 3 would-be customers because of this. By abandoning active server technology, SolarSoft claims to dramatically speed up the online shopping experience.

CREATE YOUR OWN ONLINE STORE IN UNDER AN HOUR

One of the biggest fears among online shoppers is credit card fraud. SolarSoft overcomes this resistance through 448-bit dual-end encryption, the highest commercially available which, it claims, is unparalleled by any other Web based product.

To get your shop online, answer the easy question and don't miss your chance of winning a copy of SolarSoft netShop.

eCommerce competition entry form

To win three thousand pounds worth of eCommerce software, read this page and then answer the easy question below:

What technology ISN'T used by netShop?

a) Active Server Technology
b) Shopping Server Technology
c) SolarSoft Technology

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

..... Postcode .....

Daytime phone .....

Email .....

Rules: Employees of Paragon Publishing Ltd, SolarSoft, their agents, wholesalers or retailers and/or relations may not participate. Participants must be over 18 years of age and resident in the United Kingdom. The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. There is no cash alternative to any prize offered. Proof of postage cannot be accepted as proof of delivery and no responsibility can be accepted for lost, delayed or damaged entries. Photocopied or altered entries will be disqualified. The closing date for this competition is 19 September, 2001.

From time to time, Paragon Publishing Ltd sends out news about new products and opportunities that are of interest to our readers. If you do not wish to receive such information, please tick this box ☐

HOW TO ENTER

EMAIL YOUR ANSWER to **pi@paragon.co.uk** with the heading 'netShop competition' or send it on a postcard to: netShop Competition, *Practical Internet*, Paragon House, St Peter's Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2JS to reach us no later than 19 September, 2001. Please remember to include your name, address and daytime telephone number.

Real business web hosting

There's business web hosting and there's business web hosting. Make sure you pick the right one.

When you're looking for a safe home for your web site, you have a serious choice to make. Which web hosting company do you choose? Well, when you're in business, you need to be sure your web site stays up 24 hours a day. We, at Fantastic Internet, have an impeccable record of near 100 per cent server availability, a record that we're extremely proud of. You also need to make sure you get the kind of facilities a business needs to run a successful web site. Practical Internet Magazine recently voted Fantastic Internet equal first in a review of the UK's top 20 hosting companies when evaluating the features on offer. And to add further testament, Fantastic Internet hosts web sites for the likes of Corus, The Ministry of Defence, EMAP and NHS Direct, to name but a few.

For only £199 per year, you would be making a wise choice, especially when you cast your eyes across the extensive feature list below. It's easy to join too. Simply call or visit our site and we'll set your new account up within the hour.

100mb web space, 100 pop3 mailboxes, yourdomain.co.uk or .com, graphical 'Live Stats', CGI bin, web-mail, FTP, Perl 5, Frontpage 2000, SSL area, ODBC, ASP, JMail, SendMail, 2GB bandwidth/month, unlimited email aliases, unlimited autoresponders, unlimited redirects, web control panel, technical support, UPS and generator back-up, WAP ready.

£199 per year
or £19.99 per month

fantastic™
internet
a UK Fantastic company

Serving 35,000 users throughout the UK and beyond

freephone 0800 542 7500 www.fantastic-internet.net

Your £ Business Online

The smart way to get your small business on the Net

EXPERT ADVICE ON POWERING YOUR SMALL BUSINESS INTO PROFIT

JARGON-FREE, PRACTICAL BUSINESS ADVICE

This month's *Your Business Online* takes a close look at how to promote your Web site and attract more customers. Let's face it, there's no point in spending money on creating a state-of-the-art online prescence if no-one knows about it. You won't be earning anything.

So we start on page 96 with some expert advice on how to get high rankings in search engines, followed on page 104 by a special focus on email marketing tricks. While banner advertising may be having a tough time at the moment, it is still an excellent way of raising your site's profile and increasing brand awareness. For that reason, on pages 110-112 we show you how to get your ad banner onto our people's sites using AdvertWizard. In no time you'll have visitors flocking to your site. Let me know how you get on...

Mark Newman, Editor,
mnewman@paragon.co.uk

INSIDE...

Small business news	94-95
Get top rankings in search engines	96-97
Case study	98
Creating your store	100-103
Email marketing	104-107
eBiz Q&A	109
AdvertWizard	110-112

eBriefing

SMALL BUSINESS INTERNET NEWS

ECOMMERCE FUTURE IS BRIGHT – SURVEY

A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION of Britain's small business owners are committed to the Web as a sales channel despite the dot com downturn, according to a new survey by eCommerce software developer, Actinic (**www.actinic.co.uk**).

The study of 424 randomly selected businesses with 1-499 staff from the retail, manufacturing and wholesale sectors found that 76 per cent of those companies who have a Web site but don't yet sell online, are planning to include the facility within the near future.

Furthermore, 30 per cent of small businesses with a Web site stated that they have become more likely to sell online during the last six months. In particular, businesses of 1-9 employees have significantly shifted their attitudes positively towards selling online in the last half year.

Expectations of eCommerce companies are also being met. Some 72 per cent stated that they had met or exceeded expectations and 59 per cent of Web stores are already profitable.

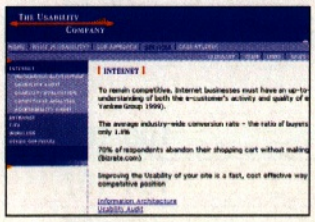
The study also reveals that the average investment for setting up an eStore is £2,400. Some 41 per cent of organisations have built their store themselves and 40 per cent have had their store built by a Web designer.

Access all areas

A NEW STUDY has highlighted the dangers faced by small businesses if they fail to ensure their Web sites are accessible to all.

Produced with the Digital Media Access Group, the report 'Web Accessibility Problems, Issues, Solutions and the Future' provides guidelines for eBusinesses to ensure their products and services are accessible to disabled users.

The report's co-author, Catriona Campbell, said: "Failing to address the needs of more than one million members of the UK's population means that UK businesses are missing out on a sizeable revenue stream. In addition to this, businesses should consider the potential legal implications in denying access to these groups."



Alan Masson of MacRoberts Solicitors added: "It's not going to be long before we start to see a number of test cases where disabled people or those representing their interests, such as disabled charities, take large e-tailers to court for failing to consider their right of accessibility."

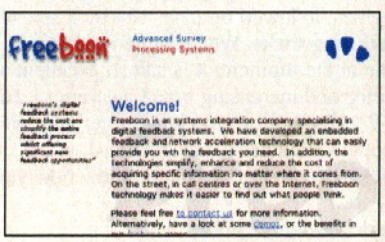
See **www.theusabilitycompany.co.uk/media/Accessibility_Report_250601.pdf** to download the report.

GET CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

WANT TO ADD feedback forms to your Web site in a matter of minutes without high costs or time-consuming technology?

Freeboon (**www.freeboon.com**) has created a set of tools that allows customer feedback to be quickly integrated with products and services, whilst significantly reducing the cost associated with traditional methods of feedback. The system supports feedback that can be dynamically reconfigured depending on the answers given, as well as supporting multiple languages for European-wide feedback. Freeboon's customers determine the shape of the feedback forms. Simple customer-satisfaction surveys are the most common, but digital competitions as an incentive to capture this feedback can increase the volume of customers offering that information.

The self-contained design means the same system can also run on hand-held devices like most common PDAs and laptops, or even any Java enabled device like the new I-Mode phones and TVs.



PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUSE IS

BUILDING UP YOUR Web site's brand awareness is a vital, yet often costly and time-consuming process. However, that's all changed with the launch of Teomedia (**www.teomedia.com**).

It's able to place an advertiser's logo or brand next to a visitors' cursor. This turns into an interactive box, letting users interact with your site by ordering products, entering competitions or finding out about special offers.

The Teomedia application involves three simple steps, which take place within seconds. When a user's cursor crosses an encoded graphic or other specified area of a site, the advertiser's logo appears next to it in the form of a Teo Icon. If the user wants more information from the advertiser, they simply click when the logo appears to open the Teo Box.

Santosh Limaye, chairman of Teomedia, said: "We wanted to find a solution that moves away from the more traditional forms of Internet advertising, while at the same time ensuring that the solution would encompass the requirements of consumer, advertiser and Web publisher alike."

Teo Icons and the associated Java code take up only 15 kilobytes of memory. Web users do not need to download any software or plug-ins in order to use it.

Give your site pizazz!

WEB BUILDING SOFTWARE makers Xara (**www.xaraonline.com**) and NetObjects (**www.netobjects.co.uk**) have teamed up to launch a new service for small business Web sites offering custom graphics, text and photo effects.

It provides Web site designers with a quick, easy and cost-effective way to create custom graphics and animations without the need for any design, programming, Java or technical skills.

Customers using NetObjects Fusion MX have immediate access to the wide range of different Xara Web Service Modules such as animated button bars, headings, scrolling text, animated photo effects and photo editing tools.

Nova Fisher, VP Marketing of Xara Online, said: "The agreement with NetObjects enables us to reach out to a wide group of people who are building their own Web site. By combining our Xara Module Web Services with NetObjects Fusion, we are enabling NetObjects' small business customers to enhance their site with striking visual effects and personalised graphics."

The Xara Online Modules are available to NetObjects Fusion MX customers. Users have access to a 30-day trial of the full versions of all Xara Modules before deciding if they wish to buy them, which may be purchased either individually or as one of the special offer collections.

SMALL BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

- Over half of UK Internet users are willing to pay for premium content, according to UK consultancy iStrat (**www.istrat.co.uk**). Of those polled, 52 per cent said they would pay for "good quality" information online. Eighty per cent of those would pay for music, and 35 percent would pay for sports Webcasts. Fifty four per cent of those aged between 19 and 40 would pay for online content, while only 42 per cent of those aged between 40 and 70 would do so.

iSTRAT making technology work

- **Forty two per cent of Internet users intend to shop online in the next three months according to a survey by Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com) and AC Neilsen. Sixty three per cent of those polled said they buy from a retail site once a month or more often, while 68 per cent of those who had previously bought online said that they would do so again over the next quarter.**
- Macromedia (**www.macromedia.com**) has launched Sitespring 1.0, a server-based application that's aimed at helping Web site designers organise the files that make up their Web site's pages. It simplifies file-naming conventions and enables Web site designers to share files more easily.

12 top e-biz resources

Need help in hunting down some more eCommerce advice? Try these handy dozen...

ECOMMERCE HELP

WWW.VIRGINBIZ.NET
Complimentary help for small businesses

WWW.YELL.COM
Download 30 start-up briefings for free

WWW.ENTERPRISEZONE.ORG.UK
Library of business information and links

WWW.BUSINESS365.CO.UK
Offering 'all your business needs' this is a handy site

WWW.SMALLBIZ.UK.COM
Get practical help for day-to-day business

GOVERNMENT HELP

WWW.LEDU-NI.GOV.UK
Northern Ireland's Small Business Agency

WWW.E-ENVOY.GOV.UK
Find out how the Government can help you

WWW.BUSINESSADVICEONLINE.ORG.UK
Legal and tax advice from the Small Business Service

WWW.UKONLINEFORBUSINESS.GOV.UK
Policy news and resources from the DTI

FUNDING

WWW.FINDYOURANGEL.COM
Find investors and consultants for your business

WWW.FIRSTSTARTUP.COM
Advice for start-ups and tips for getting funding

WWW.BVCA.CO.UK
Excellent British Venture Capital Association site

Get top rankings in search engines

Bruce Townsend of Actinic, the eCommerce software developer, reveals a few tricks to help you get your site to the top of search engine rankings

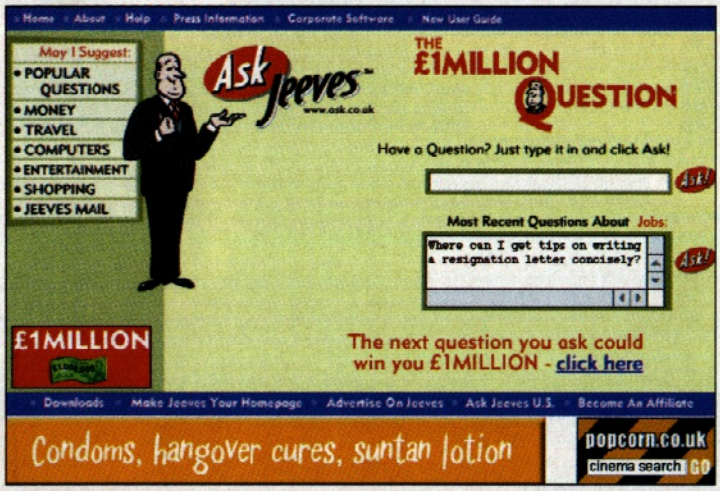
If you have an online shop, you shouldn't ignore the marketing opportunity that presents itself with the major search engines. Currently, they generate some seven per cent of traffic to Web sites and are the top source for new visitors.

According to a recent survey, almost 90 per cent of small to medium businesses with eCommerce sites have submitted their sites to the major search engines. You can't afford the competitive disadvantage of being in the other 10 per cent and you can't afford to ignore the traffic which search engines generate.

Building your site with a software package that generates static HTML pages will give it the best chance of catching the eye of the search engines. Take, for example, The Gentleman's Shop, a Berkshire barber's shop selling top-of-the-range grooming accessories for men.

With no previous experience, Charlotte Johnson built a Web site (**www.gentlemans-shop.co.uk**) that accounted for 20 per cent of the company's turnover within a few months.

*Mike Howarth of **www.jewellers.net** said: "We were initially pleased at getting 1,500 visitors each month to our site with over a 1000 of those being international customers. Now the total figure is around 35,000 per month"*



Much of the site traffic comes as a result of people using search engines.

"We don't know very much about search engines," says Charlotte, "but without us doing anything, all our product pages are automatically indexed in many of them because our software, Actinic Catalog, uses HTML-generated pages. As a result we're receiving interest from as far afield as Hong Kong and The Falklands."

Nevertheless, a little time spent actively promoting your site to the major search engines can deliver dramatic returns, as Mike Howarth of Lancashire-based jeweller R&J Howarth discovered. "We were initially pleased at getting 1,500 visitors each month to our site (**www.jewellers.net**) with over a 1000 of those being international customers. Now the total figure is around 35,000 per month. Corporem.com, our Web designers, have done a lot to drive up our visitor rate by registering us on all the search engines and with organisations like Which? WebTrader. As a result the UK now accounts for about 90 per cent of our online orders.

In the UK, MSN and Yahoo! are the top two search sites in terms of audience reach. Interestingly more UK visitors use **www.msn.com** and **www.yahoo.com** than the corresponding .co.uk domains, though the same is not true of third-placed Ask Jeeves (**www.ask.co.uk**). Google is the leader among the pure crawler-based search engines, while one-time leader AltaVista (**http://uk.altavista.com**) now lags behind.

Seventy five per cent of users don't go beyond the second page of search engine results. That means if your site isn't in the top 40 results, you probably won't be noticed. So make sure at least one page on your site – preferably your home page – is set up as described here, to give yourself the best possible chance of getting noticed online.

Tips for more hits

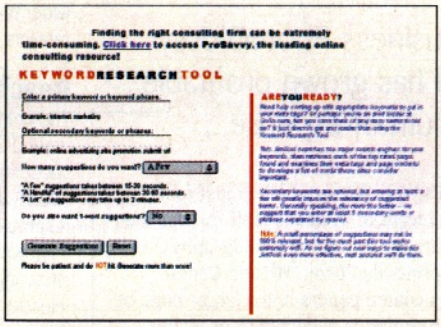
Choose two or three key phrases that you think customers will use to search for a product or service like yours. Avoid single words or very broad terms – there will be so many sites in these kinds of category that you will be very unlikely to get ranked on the first or second pages.

The smaller the pile, the easier it is to climb to the top. To find out roughly how many pages exist that match your chosen phrase, search for it at AltaVista, which returns the total for the number of pages found. For example searching for 'birds' yields over 170,000 pages, and searching for 'parrot' yields over 20,000, but searching for 'african grey parrot ' yields less than 150 relevant pages.

Don't try and cover too many phrases in a single page. If you need to use more phrases, set up separate pages for them. To be sure you've trapped all the appropriate, use an analysis tool like the free Jimtools Keyword Analyser (**www.jimtools.com/keywords/index.html**). Also take a look at your competitors' sites to see what key words they are using.

In the header section of your home page include Meta tags (description and keywords) that contain your key phrases. Use lower case – over 80 per cent of people search in lower case, and most search engines are not case sensitive.

Include the same key phrases in the Title tag. For example, suppose you are running a sailing site and you have decided that 'boats for sale' and



'yachts for sale' are the search phrases your potential customers are most likely to use. You would set up your meta tags something like this:

```
<HEAD>
<TITLE>sailing on the seven seas: boats for sale, yachts for sale</TITLE>
<META Name="description" Content="boats for sale, yachts for sale and everything you need to know about sailing">
<META Name="keywords" Content=boats, sailing, sails, boats for sale, yachts for sale">
</HEAD>
```

Use the key phrases about four times in your Web page, starting near the top. If your page is based on a table, the top means near the top of the left-hand column. Repeat the phrases in comments, and in Alt text attached to images, such as:

```
<IMG SRC="yacht.gif" ALT=" boats for sale, yachts for sale ">
```

Get as many links to your pages as possible from other sites, as this will affect your ranking in some major search engines.

Don't put text in small or white or the same colour as the background – you will be penalised by several search engines.

Don't use frames. Several major search engines won't link through them. However well your pages are optimised, they won't get ranked if the search engines can only find the frameset page. Many search engine specialists do use frames to present additional information to search engines, or to 'cloak' pages and make them appear differently to search engines than to end users; but it's very easy to get blacklisted for spamming using these techniques. If you want to use them, it's best to employ a specialist.

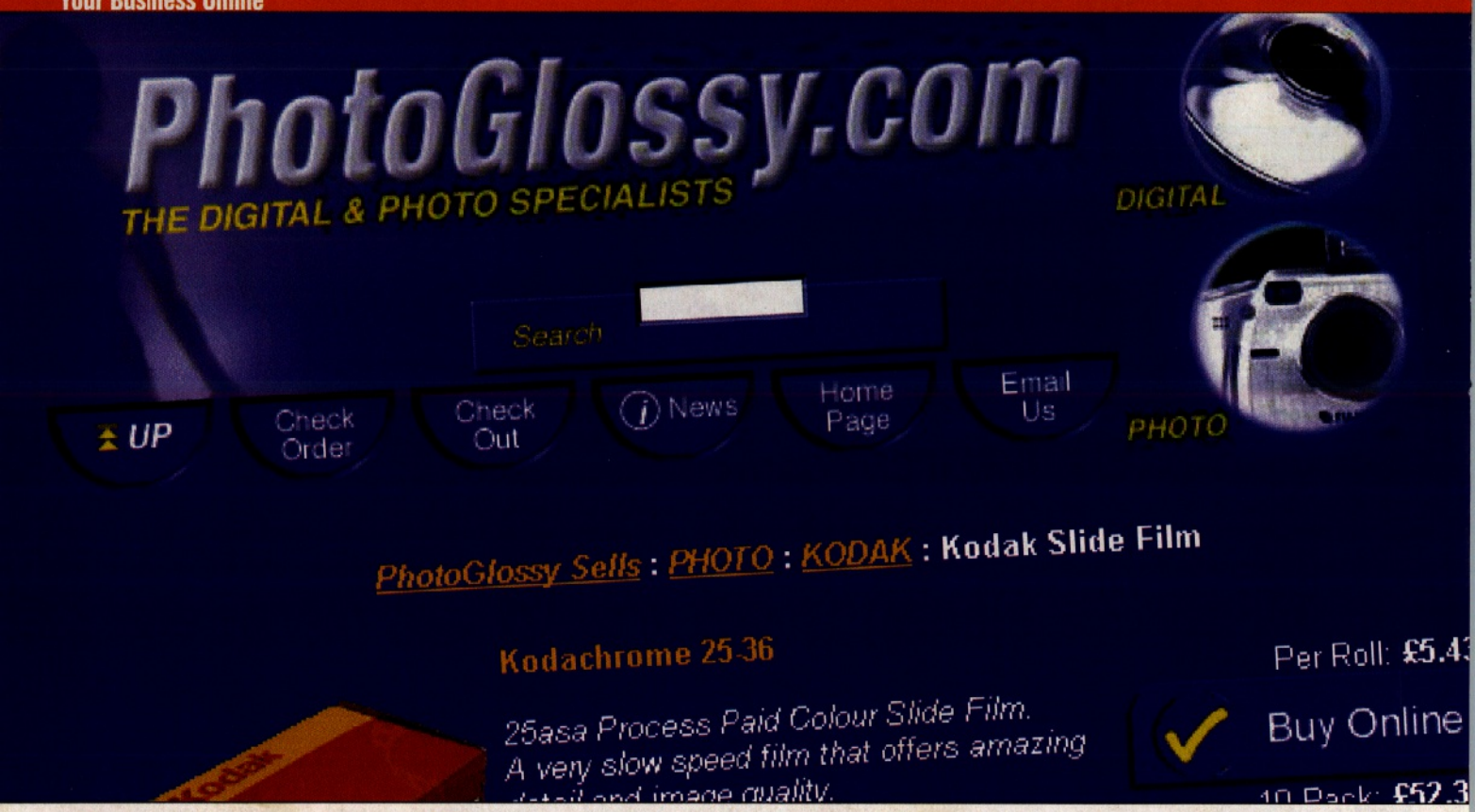
To see how your site ranks with the search engines, visit one of the many sites that offer this as a free service such as Link Popularity (**www.linkpopularity.com**), or download a copy of the free AgentWebRanking software (**www.aadsoft.com/agentWebranking/ranks.htm**).

Search engine optimisation is still as much an art as a science – there are no guarantees – and the results can range from the spectacular to the bizarre and inexplicable. Love them or hate them, they are still a major source of Web traffic and you ignore them at your peril. □

WHERE TO BE SEEN

Manually submit your pages to the major search engines listed below. Some require payment. Resubmit on a regular basis – you can obtain software that will help you with this.

- AltaVista http://uk.altavista.com
- AOL www.aol.co.uk
- Direct Hit www.directhit.com
- Excite www.excite.co.uk
- FAST www.alltheWeb.com
- Google www.google.co.uk
- GoTo www.goto.com
- GoTo www.goto.com
- Infoseek www.infoseek.com
- Inktomi www.positiontech.com
- Looksmart www.looksmart.co.uk
- Lycos www.lycos.co.uk
- MSN www.msn.co.uk
- Netscape Netcenter http://search.netscape.com
- Northern Light www.northernlight.com
- Open Directory http://dmoz.org
- Yahoo! http://uk.yahoo.com



Snap happy!

Small online business PhotoGlossy explains how it has grown profitable with the minimum of expense...

PhotoGlossy.com's Web site was built in just four weeks by a small team of in-house staff for less than £1,200. Concentrating on selling photography consumables – primarily Epson, HP and Canon printer inks, plus coated papers and a large range of films – the company's turnover is expected to grow by more than 200 per cent during 2001 with the site accounting for over 50 per cent of customer orders.

One of the reasons behind the site's success is its clarity and simplicity, director Steven De Jersey told us. "Its success is largely due to the simple layout together with the use of clear image and text buttons for browser navigation, which mean that customers do not have to rely on time-consuming product searches to find the item that they want to buy.

"Combined with effective media branding and an aggressive pricing structure, this winning formula proves that you don't need multi-million pound backers to have a successful dot com enterprise," he adds.

"We undercut retail by up to 70 per cent and all of our major dot com competitors by several pounds. We also offer a wider range of photographic and computer products than big retailers, or online competitors currently offer."

Reaching customers

The company reaches its customer base through adverts in around 20 PC and photography magazines, rather than spending big bucks on online promotions. "We've found advertising in specialist magazines gives a much better response compared to online marketing."

However, offline advertising is not the only strategy for attracting more customers. PhotoGlossy.com also has a telesales department and accepts orders by fax and freepost. There's also a full colour brochure for customers to leaf through in their own time.

But it's the Web site that's the main focus for future growth, says De Jersey. "The key to maintaining our success is to keep customers updated with the latest new products and information on a regular basis. Our plans for the future of the site are dependent on the technology of our customers and access speeds via the Net.

"In house, the major change will be the introduction of a more sophisticated software system developed by CGI Systems. It offers complete connectivity between our Internet site and our mail order sales database with live stock control and automated online sales."

So if you're wondering whether your small business site will ever become profitable, take heart from PhotoGlossy.com's story. It goes to show that small sites run on low budgets can still hit the big time. □

Successful entrepreneur Steven De Jersey provides proven eCommerce tips and advice

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

SO WHAT ADVICE does PhotoGlossy.com give to other small business entrepreneurs hoping to power their sites into the big time?

"Our advice to them is to focus on their Web site and keep it simple and fast for Web users. Browse as many Web sites as possible – as if you were the end user – and make notes of precisely what you felt was good or bad and learn from there," says director Steven De Jersey.

"You should start small and keep your costs low. That's the main advantage of the Internet. If it works small it'll give you and any backers you require the confidence to expand aggressively from there. The opportunities for focused, specialist companies are actually growing, despite the adverse publicity of large dot coms failing.

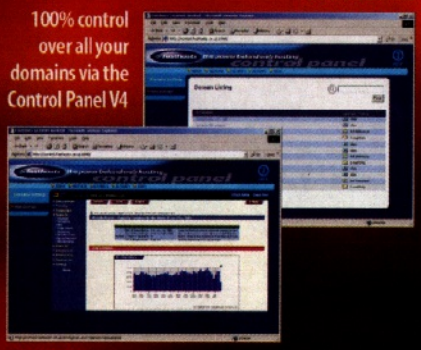
"As long as you track your marketing spend and don't over-complicate your business, you can't go far wrong."

NEW VIRUS PROTECTION FOR YOUR EMAIL

the power behind web hosting

- NEW 100 MBit Internet Connection
- Multi-Million Pound Onsite Data Centre in association with the Intel Corporation
- Windows 2000 Servers
- Powerful web based Control Panel

100% control over all your domains via the Control Panel V4



DOMAIN LISTING

LIVE STATS

Business Account

- **200 MB Web space**
- Your domain name registered **FREE**
- **Unlimited POP3** e-mail accounts
- **Unlimited e-mail** forwarding
- Hosted on Windows 2000 servers
- Full support for ASP3 and Perl
- Full support for Microsoft Frontpage 2000 Extensions
- **Virus Protection** for your email
- Advanced Virtual Control Panel V4
- 24 x 7 Telephone and E-mail support
- ODBC database connectivity
- Live statistics for your website
- Full CGI support
- SQL Server 7.0 Database connectivity
- Advanced Password Protection for your website

FREE INSTANT SET UP
£19.99
PER MONTH
or £199 PA

Personal Account

- **200 MB Web space**
- Your domain name registered **FREE**
- **Unlimited POP3** e-mail accounts
- **Unlimited e-mail** forwarding
- Hosted on Windows 2000 servers
- Full support for ASP3 and Perl
- Full support for Microsoft Frontpage 2000 Extensions
- **Virus Protection** for your email
- Advanced Virtual Control Panel V4
- 24 x 7 Telephone and E-mail support

FREE INSTANT SET UP
£8.99
PER MONTH
or £60 PA

Reseller Account also available. Host unlimited domains for only £50 per month

fasthosts

24 hrs 7 days a week 24 Technical Support

The power behind web hosting

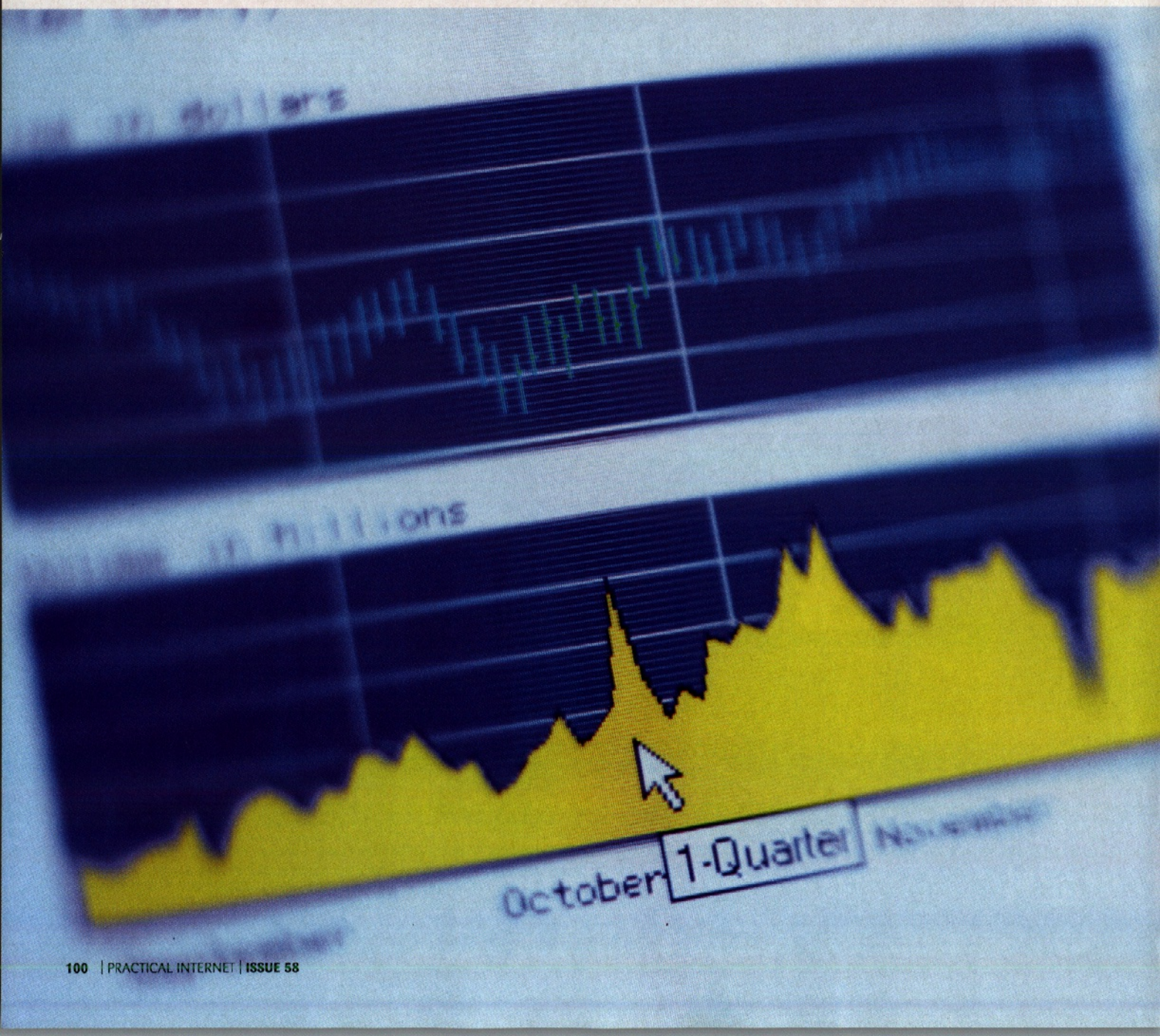
Call 01452 541260

www.fasthosts.co.uk

intel premier PROVIDER 2001

Build a profitable Web site in under an hour!

Yes, you really can set up your own online shop in just a few minutes and then start selling to the world. **Danny McAleer** shows you how...

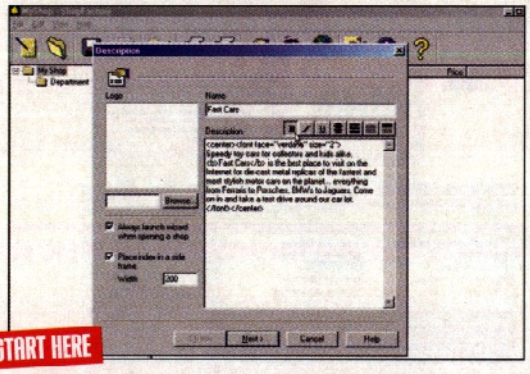


You can find ShopFactory on this month's Practical Internet CD

THERE WAS A time when setting up a shop took weeks of sweaty labourers lumbering around putting up shelves, followed by more laborious weeks filling these shelves. Using the Web as the basis for your store, however, can negate all this fussing around. You can have a basic shop up and running in less than half an hour.

In fact, 3D3 claims that you can put together a simple shop in under five minutes with the latest version of its eCommerce package, ShopFactory (a trial version of which is on your free cover CD-ROM). In truth, you'll need a little more time than that, but once you've got together a list of products and have gathered the requisite pile of photos and graphics, it really doesn't take long.

Not only does it have more wizards than a magic convention to make the whole process as easy as possible, there's also a built-in payment system.

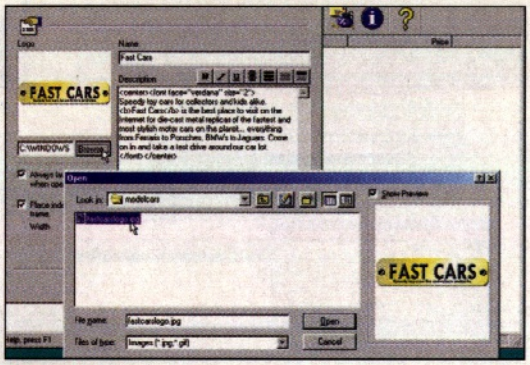


1 Invite your customers inside

When you open ShopFactory the 'Shop Wizard' dialog box will automatically appear, where you can configure the store's main settings. In the first step, enter a name for the shop, then fill in the description field. This is the text that will appear on the main page.

ADDING YOUR OWN HTML

With ShopFactory it is possible to add your own mark-up into the text fields, either to add extra pictures and other such media or to simply manipulate the formatting of text to give it bold, italic or other properties. For the most part this must be done manually, so you do need to know how to code HTML satisfactorily. However, there are occasions, such as in the shop description, when ShopFactory gives you a set of text formatting controls, enabling you to create headlines, align text and set text properties such as bold, italic or underlined.

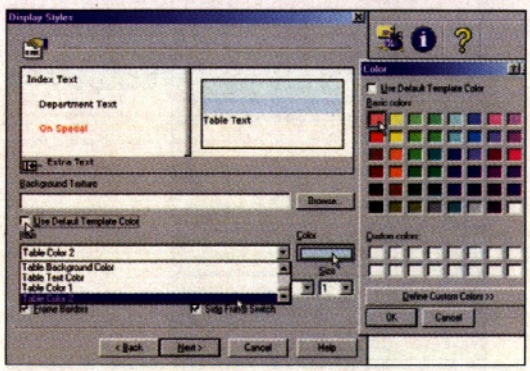


2 Add a shop logo

Press the 'Browse' button, then use the File Selector to find the image that you want to use as the shop's main logo on the front page. Before pressing 'Next' to continue, ensure that the 'Side Frame' box is checked. This enables customers to quickly move around the store.

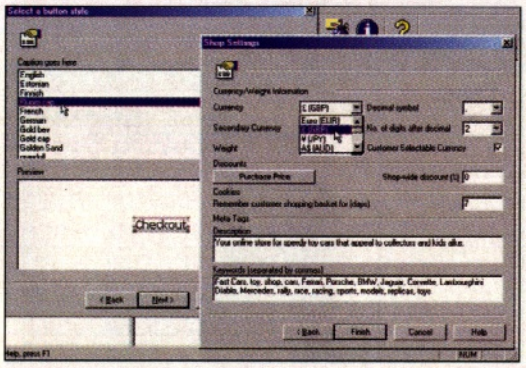
3 Choosing a style

There are more than 50 different templates, so there's bound to be one that's suitable for your store (it can be customised later, too). Scroll down the list at the top, clicking once on the name to view the preview thumbnail in the panel below. When you're happy, press 'Next'.



4 Customising the template

Choose the shop language and then progress to the 'Display' styles. Here, you can set your choice of font for the shop and modify the colours used in the template. Uncheck the 'Default Template Colour' option to choose your own hue.



5 Buttons and descriptions

As with the layout templates, there are copious numbers of button styles to choose from. Pick one from the list (previews are displayed below) and press 'Next' to continue. Set the shop's currency and then add some keywords and a description to summarise your site's content.

TOP TIPS

! Some of ShopFactory's templates do not have eCommerce facilities included, so if you don't want to add online buying at this stage, opt for something like the 'Default Gallery' option. To check whether a shop layout includes eCommerce facilities, press the 'Info' button in the 'Shop Configuration' dialog.

! If, after previewing your site, you decide that either the template or the button style that you chose doesn't look as good in the finished shop, then simply click on the 'Properties' button in the top toolbar to open the Shop Wizard again. Jump through to the 'Template' section and make any necessary changes, then continue through to the end and press 'Finish' to update your choices.

JARGON BUSTER

Meta tags
These HTML tags are a way of describing the content of your Web pages to search engines. The most important Meta tags are 'Keywords' and 'Description'. The former tells search engines which words can be linked to the content of your site. You can have up to 1,024 characters in your keywords Meta tag, although you should be careful not to repeat words. The description is often displayed by search engines underneath the entry for your Web site and help to reveal the site's content in greater depth.

SSL
Secure Socket Layer is a form of encryption that ensures any sensitive or confidential data passed over the Web, if intercepted, cannot be read by anyone other than the intended recipient. SSL encryption is commonly used to protect credit card details when buying products over the Internet.

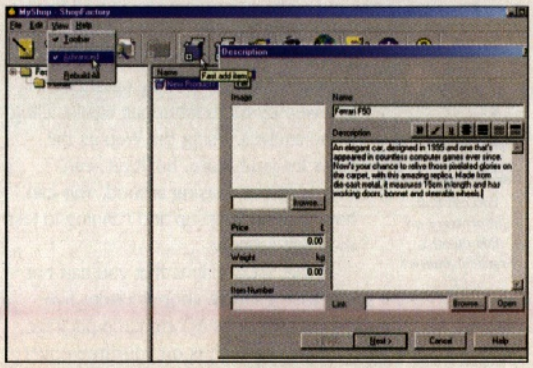
Payment provider
This is a company set up to handle online credit card transactions on your behalf. The idea is that it processes the payment side of the order for you, then sends you details so that you can despatch the goods to your customer. The money is then automatically credited to your business account, minus a small service charge.

TOP TIP

When you click on the 'Properties' button, you will open the properties for whatever part of your shop is currently selected. Therefore, if you want to edit the shop's global properties, ensure that the topmost icon (the one labelled with your shop name) in the left-hand panel is selected first.

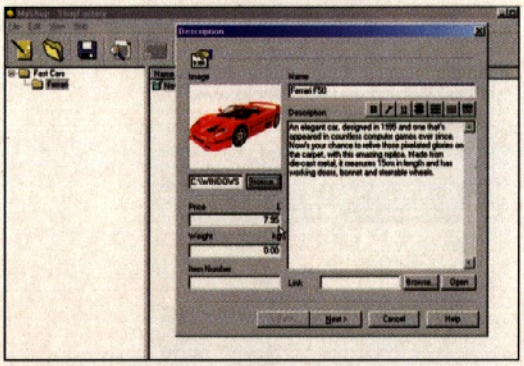
6 Defining a department

With the basics of your shop set up, you can now begin to customise the first department. Double-click on 'Department' in the left-hand panel. Enter a name and description, then press 'Browse' to add a logo for this department.



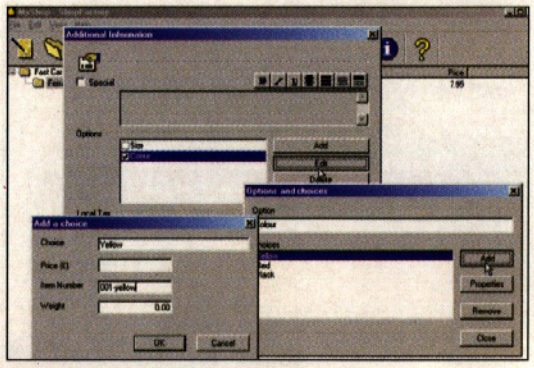
7 Stocking the shelves

From the top toolbar, select 'Fast Add Item' and then, from the 'View' menu, switch to 'Advanced' mode so you can set extra properties for your products. Double-click on the new product entry in the right-hand panel, and enter a name and description for it.



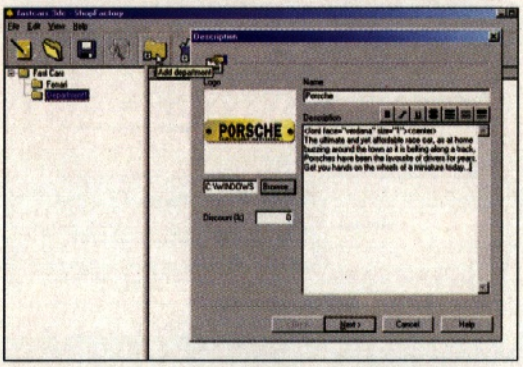
8 Prices and pictures

Press 'Browse' to load the product image, and enter its price (and weight, if applicable) in the space below. If you have a larger photo of the product, you can get this image to link to it. Click on the 'Browse' button next to the 'Link' box and select the larger version.



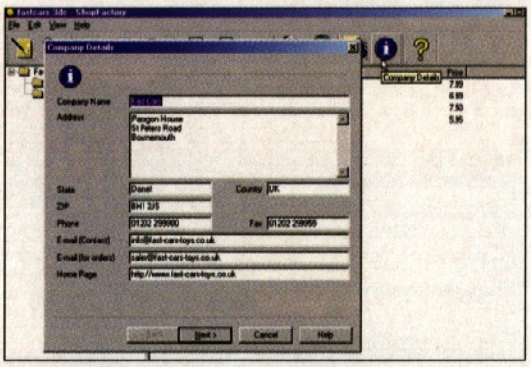
9 Customers' choice

Press 'Next' to access the additional product options. To give your customers a choice, check the appropriate box. Press 'Edit' and click on 'Add' in the 'Options' box to add, one at a time, the various optional attributes. Note that 'Price' is how much extra the option costs.



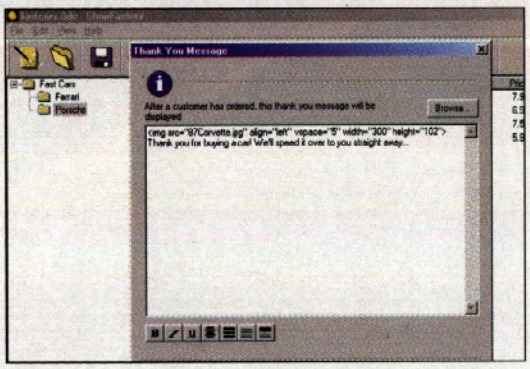
10 More departments and products

Continue to add products to your department as per the last three steps. When you're ready to start a new section (departments all appear on individual pages), press the 'Add Department' button in the top toolbar. As before, double-click on the entry in the left panel to edit it.



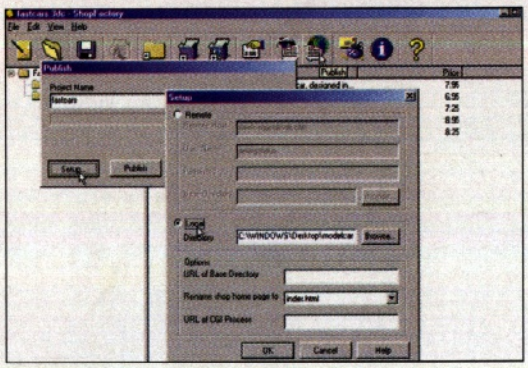
11 Providing contact info

Click on the 'Company Details' button in the top toolbar. In the dialog box that opens, enter your shop's mailing address and email contacts. Press 'Next' and choose your payment provider (if you don't have one, you can use 3D3's free SSL server).



12 Rounding it off

After setting up your payment provider details, click 'Next' and then fill in the next three sections: additional contact information, terms and conditions and a thank you message. The text you add will appear in the relevant sections of your site.

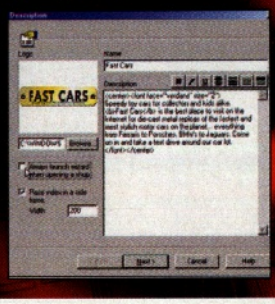


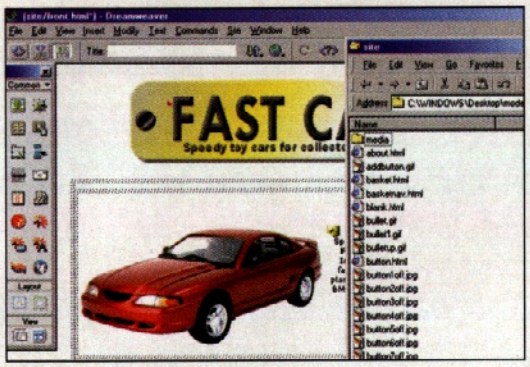
13 Local publishing

Once you've finished building the shop, you can make amendments to the design by saving your site to hard disk instead of uploading it. Click on 'Publish', and then choose 'Setup…'. In the dialog box, choose 'Local' and pick a folder. Press 'OK', then 'Publish'.

TOP TIP

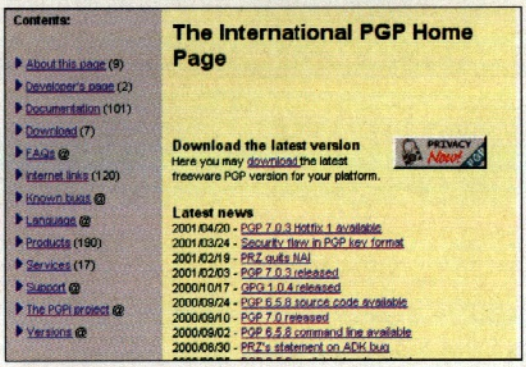
If you don't want the Shop Wizard to open each time you start ShopFactory (it can be a bit frustrating when you've already built a shop and just want to load that instead), click on the 'Properties' button. In the 'Global Shop Properties' dialog box, uncheck the box that's labelled 'Always launch wizard when opening a shop'.





14 Additional editing

In the folder that you specified in the 'Publish' dialog box, you'll find the resultant HTML. Do bear in mind that any changes you make to the code with another program will make no difference to the original ShopFactory file, so you'll need to redo them when you export the shop.



15 Paying for it

With the ShopFactory Professional package, there's a free 'SSL Email Order' processing service. This is handy if you don't have a real-time transaction facility, because it can save you a lot of money. Once you've registered it, reopen ShopFactory's 'Company Information' wizard and enter your key in the space provided.

FINISH HERE

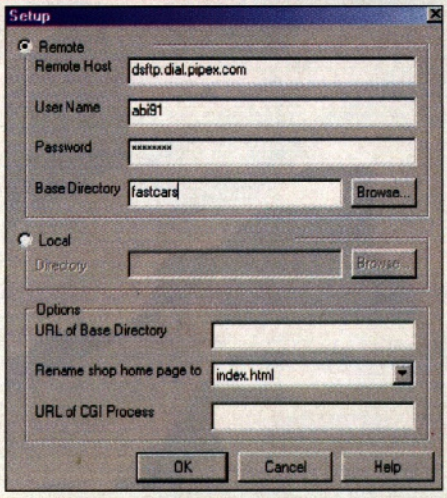
16 Previewing your shop

You can take a look at how your shop is developing at any time. Just press the 'Preview' button in the top toolbar and the site will open in Internet Explorer. These gives you a pretty good idea of how the finished site will look when it's online.

THE NEXT STEP

Publishing it online

If you chose not to edit the shop in any other program, you can use ShopFactory's built-in FTP facility to upload it. Follow the same procedure that you did for publishing your files locally, except in the 'Publish Setup' dialog box choose the 'Remote' option. The 'Remote Host' is the name of your FTP server (your ISP will be able to tell you this). Enter the username and password that you use to log onto the site (this is usually the same as your dial-up setting, unless you're using a Web hosting agency), then press 'OK' and 'Publish'. ShopFactory will then connect to the Web and upload all the files for you. Don't forget to test it out thoroughly first (try out the ordering process, too), before inviting customers to your shop.



Advertise your site with email

Email can play a leading role in supporting your Web site's presence. **Clive Hawkins** offers some advice on harnessing this powerful tool whilst avoiding the potential risk of your messages being labeled as 'spam'...

Considering the expense and effort involved in setting up an eCommerce Web site, it's not surprising that the potential of email to help generate new and repeat business can sometimes be overlooked. Although your Web site is the virtual 'shop-front' of your business, email can play the role of your sales and customer service staff, offering personalised contact with your customers. This, in turn, can help to build a 'one-to-one' relationship with them and retain their loyalty and custom as your business develops.

Many people tend to think of the Internet in terms of Web sites, but email is the more widely used application. In both private and business use, email has enormous benefits as a fast and low-cost communication tool and it can be used in many creative ways to effectively support an online business.

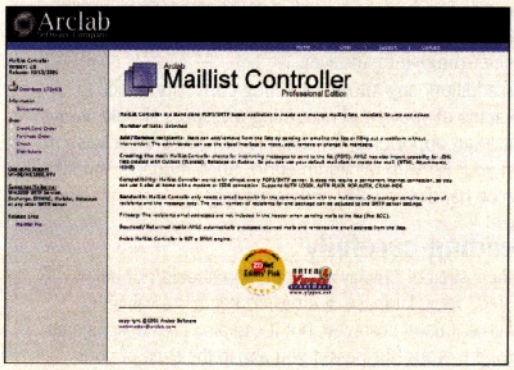
You should plan on ways of harnessing the use of email as a marketing tool, depending upon your target market and your objectives. However, with issues of privacy and intrusiveness at the forefront of many user's minds, email can also raise high emotions. So be warned! If you don't handle your email marketing strategy with great care and sensitivity, the backlash from prospects or customers can cause permanent damage to your business.

A powerful marketing tool

Every company should maintain an up-to-date list of its customers and prospects and this is no different for an online business. You have numerous opportunities to collect information and email addresses of customers and visitors to your Web site. This information can then be used as the basis of your email marketing campaigns and can serve any number of roles. These include tasks such as notifying customers of special offers when you want to boost sales of a product, to offering valuable information as part of your customer service, or researching user's views over an issue specifically related to your business.

As explained later, it is vital that your email campaigns are only sent to those customers who have stated that they are willing to receive your messages. You can achieve this initially by offering something of value in return for their details, such as a regular newsletter containing tips and advice, or advance notification of new product lines or special deals. Autoresponders can also be used to collect email addresses in return for some useful information.

By providing an opportunity on your site to encourage visitors to register their details, you can build a valuable list that can be contacted regularly to help keep your Web site 'top of mind' and encourage repeat visits to your site.



JARGON BUSTER

Autoresponders
Text files sent automatically by email when requested by a user.

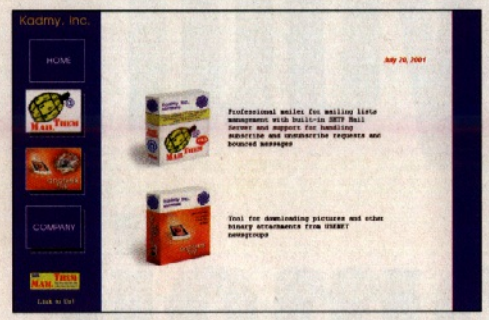
Signature files
A pre-set tag line with contact details attached to outgoing emails.

Email spam
Unsolicited and unwelcome commercial emails sent out in large quantities.

Permission email
Email messages sent to recipients who have positively stated that they want to receive them.

Privacy policy
A visible statement on a Web site describing how customer data will be used.

Bounce management
The procedure used for handling returned emails and updating a database.



Kadmy (www.kadmy.com) offers professional mailing list software that's able to handle subscribe and unsubscribe requests along with bounced messages

Customer service, 24/7

Apart from the telephone (yes, remember the telephone!), email can be a vital tool to help you communicate quickly and efficiently with your customers. Any visitor to your site may wish to ask a question or place an order, so an immediate automated reply, thanking them for their contact, can be an essential mechanism to help confirm that their message has been received. This must then also be followed up as quickly as possible by an answer from a 'real' person.

However, don't get complacent about the use of email as a customer service tool. You need to establish standards to make sure your customers receive a response within an acceptable time period. And don't overlook the quality of responses being sent out. Just because email has become a casual form of immediate contact with many people, it doesn't mean your business should also be represented by abbreviations, incorrect spellings and poor grammar. You should insist that any email correspondence represents your business in the same way that a more traditional letter would.

Signature files should be used in a consistent format on all email messages from your company, containing a contact name, address and telephone number, plus one or more appropriate links into your Web site.

Permission-based marketing

Your policy regarding use of customer emails should be open and transparent. Make sure that anyone contacting you from your Web site is aware of your commitment to their privacy. You should set out your policy so that anyone submitting their details can see how you will protect their details or what plans you might have for future marketing activity, either for your own business or by third parties. Every customer should then be given the option to click a box to indicate how they may, or may not, want their information to be used.

There is continual debate over the use of 'opt-in' or 'opt-out' techniques to allow Web users to actively request further correspondence or not. Whichever method you decide to use on your site, the core principle should be that whenever you do collect and record an email address that may be used for marketing in the future, the provider should always be aware of what you may be doing with their details. It's also important to give them the option to agree or remove themselves.

In addition, any future marketing correspondence to recipients of your email marketing messages should always contain an opportunity for them to remove themselves from your list with minimum effort. Such requests should then be handled quickly and accurately.

Treading carefully

All the issues of privacy and intrusion should not be ignored. Your database of email contacts is a valuable resource if used correctly, but it can also create significant damage to your business if you abuse the trust of your customers. The use of 'spam', or unsolicited and unwelcome email, can raise high passions with Internet users. You will constantly be walking a narrow line between giving your customers what they want and appreciate, to being pilloried directly or, even worse, being the target of public anger on a widely-read newsgroup because you've overstepped the mark and angered some customers.

If you plan to send out sales messages by email you should begin with your own permission-based lists that must also be current and clean. You could consider renting from the growing number of email lists that are available, but make sure you handle any of these with care. You want to make sure that recipients will not be offended by your intrusion into their mailbox.

Email messages should always come from a named contact at your company and be personalised to each recipient as best as possible. Never bulk mail a message that visibly includes all the recipients' email addresses, you need to make sure that the software you use is reliable for large quantities and has been tested.

Using the right tools

There are many issues involved in running a successful email marketing campaign, not least the ones listed already listed. There are many useful online resources or books on the subject, so do some research to help you decide whether to use HTML or plain text formats, how often to send messages, whether to include advertising and so on.

Before you can embark on any bulk email campaign, however, you need to spend some time finding the right software. Mailing software tools come in many shapes and sizes and the table shown provides a few examples of some popular versions. Choose carefully, as your database and mailing software will become the nerve centre of your online business, helping you to interact and build a relationship with your customers. But always remember what a brittle relationship it can be and how one simple mistake or oversight can destroy a valuable customer base within seconds.

Also, don't forget to ensure that your ISP is aware of your bulk-mailing plans. Many ISPs will block multiple mailings and even cancel your account, so make sure you know what is acceptable with them before hitting the 'Send' button.

Email marketing is an immensely powerful tool that can help you grow your online business if used effectively. To follow the basic principles well, simply remember all the occasions when you have been delighted or disgusted by an email message from a company in the past. Then use those experiences to treat your customers just as you would like to be treated yourself. □

ONLINE RESOURCES

ClickZ
www.clickz.com
An excellent resource for Web marketers, including daily email advice.

Web Promote
www.webpromote.com
Another quality resource with news and articles on email marketing techniques.

Wilson Web
www.wilsonweb.com
A popular reference source for marketing a small business online.

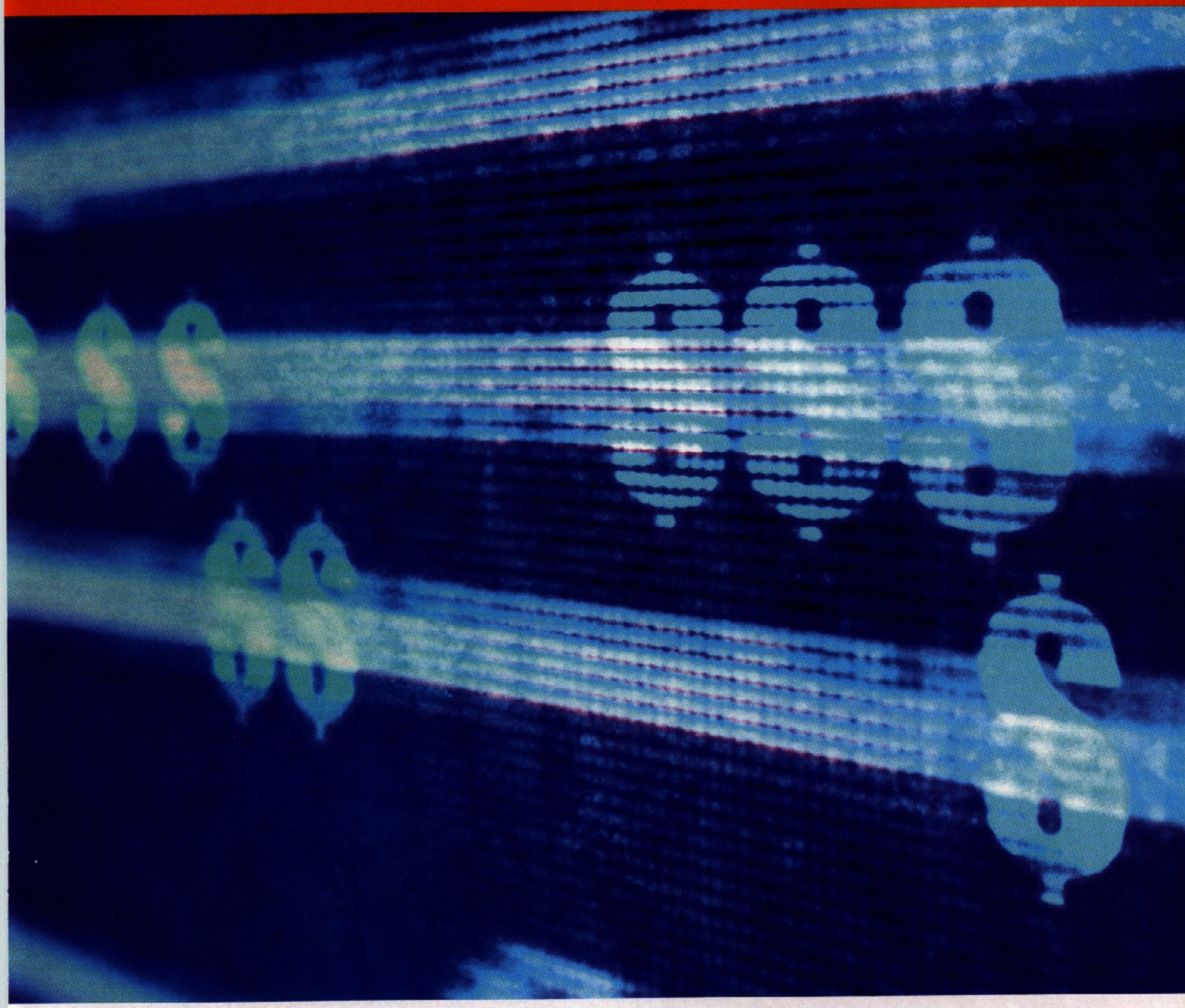
EuroCAUCE
www.euro.cauce.org
A volunteer organisation set up to combat the use of spam emails.

Ezinesearch
www.ezinehub.com
A searchable directory of more than 1,000 email newsletters.

Postmasterdirect
www.postmasterdirect.com
One of the largest owners of 'opt-in' email lists.

CLIVE HAWKINS

This feature's author, Clive Hawkins, is an Internet marketing consultant who runs the Web Search Workshop (www.websearchworkshop.co.uk), providing businesses with improved search engine placement, link building and other online marketing support.



EXAMPLES OF BULK EMAIL SOFTWARE AVAILABLE

Product name	What it does	Price	Trial download	More information
Mailmaster	Good value email manager for small volume mailings	$19.99	30-day trial	www.gounev.com/mailmaster
Mail Them Pro	A low-cost tool for mostly small volume email campaigns	$59.95	N/A	www.kadmy.com
MailList Controller	This standalone tool can handle unlimited mailing volumes	$199	30-day trial	www.arclab.com/products/amlc
Mailking	A popular and flexible bulk email tool for small business use	$239	30-day trial	www.mailking.com
Broadcast	Email software available in three versions	from $249	10-day trial	www.mailworkz.com

firevision.co.uk

07947 800 360
info@firevision.co.uk

£9.99 for your own .co.uk or .com

Register your domain name now, before somebody else does!
Search rapidly for hundreds of names & order securely online.
Take advantage of discounts for multi-domain orders.

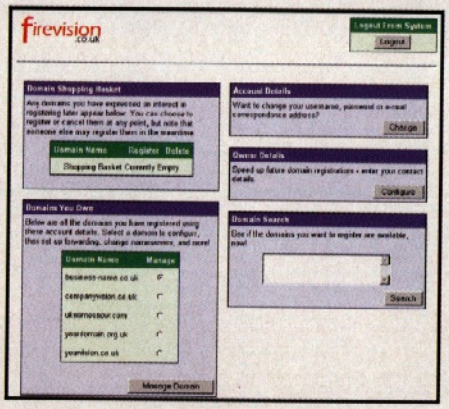
Standard Account

The standard account costs only **£9.99**, and allows you to register a UK domain for 2 years, or .com, .net, .org domains for 1 year. The standard account comes with the following services and features:

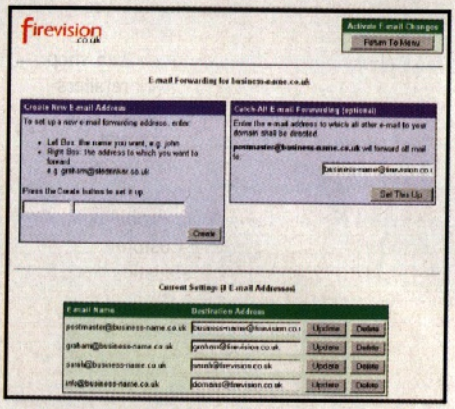
- ★ Masked web forwarding
- ★ 25 email addresses
- ★ Email autoresponders
- ★ All-2-One email forwarding
- ★ All-2-One subdomain forwarding
- ★ 15 subdomains
- ★ Intelligent forwarding
- ★ Virtual business card
- ★ Holding page or for-sale page
- ★ Free extensive email support
- ★ No advertising!

£9.99

(£8.50 + VAT)



The front page of our easy-to-use domain management system.

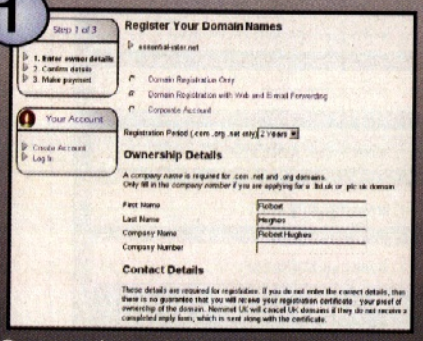


Setting up email addresses within the domain management system.

Before you buy a domain, why not try our services for free? Web forwarding, e-mail forwarding and e-mail autoresponders are all available for you to test, so that you can feel confident before you buy a domain that Firevision is the right choice for you.

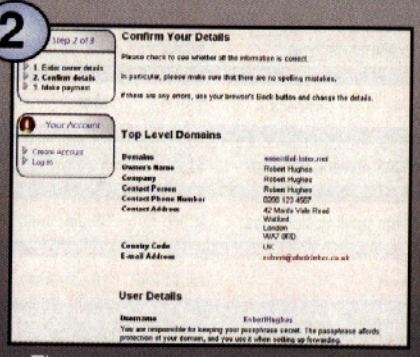
3 Simple Steps To Registering A Domain Name At Firevision

1



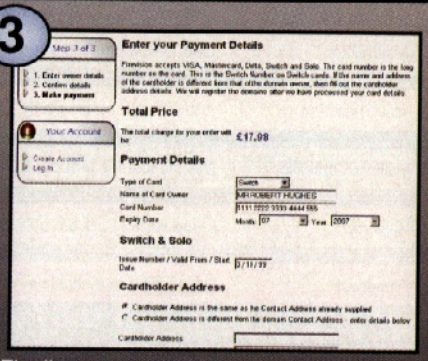
Once you have checked that your domain is available, the first step to registration is to enter the ownership and contact details.

2



The next page asks you to check the details are correct.

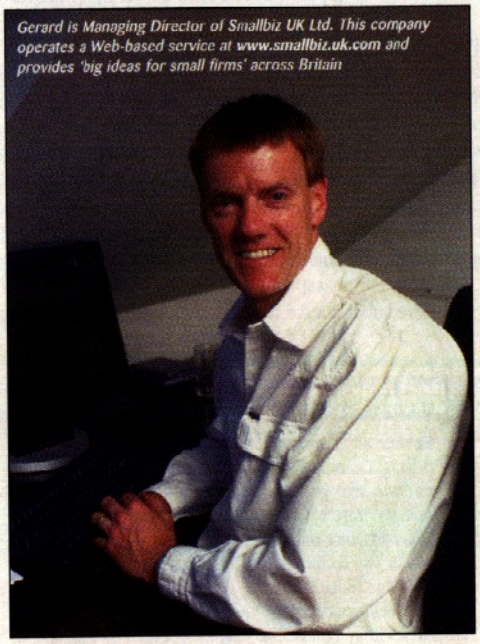
3



Finally, enter your card details, and your order will be processed, usually within minutes.

eBusiness Q&A

Gerard Liston of Smallbiz UK answers your eBusiness questions. Email him at **pi@paragon.co.uk**



*Gerard is Managing Director of Smallbiz UK Ltd. This company operates a Web-based service at **www.smallbiz.uk.com** and provides 'big ideas for small firms' across Britain*

SECURITY CONCERNS

Q My online shop stores some credit card details of customers online. How can I be sure that the details are safe from hackers and other security breaches? Is there a company that will check out my security for me?

Wesley Price

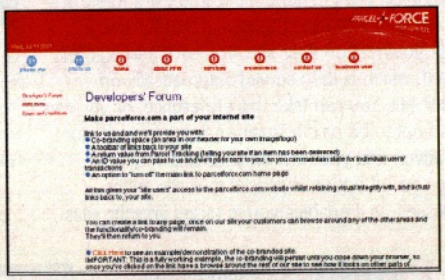
A To answer your last question first: Yes, there are plenty of companies that will advise you about the security of your Web shop. However, since even banks and major retailers suffer embarrassing breaches in security, it is clear that spending money on experts and sophisticated security systems is not necessarily the answer.

Security and confidentiality are probably the two principal factors influencing customer confidence in online shopping. Statistics show that a large percentage of online shoppers 'abandon' their shopping cart at the checkout stage – presumably suffering an attack of nerves as they realise their credit card details are about to be requested. Conversely, the anonymity of the Internet makes it difficult for online retailers to distinguish legitimate shoppers from fraudsters, who may include those using stolen credit cards or hackers searching for customers' card details and even editing source code to change the price of goods being purchased.

For most small firms, the cost of sophisticated online security systems is prohibitive. Apart from that, why 're-invent the wheel' when you have a choice of reliable off-the-shelf options? Securetrading.com, Datacash.com and Netbanx.com are companies that all offer plug-in solutions. Each are likely to be more secure and affordable than anything a security expert will advise you to build yourself.

RELIABLE SHIPPING

Q Can you suggest a cheap service we can use to get our site's products (books, DVDs and



videos) delivered to customers across the world? I'd like to offer customers tracking of their products, too.

Mike O'Hara

A To many start-up Web shops, the idea of a global marketplace sounds very attractive. For the cost of a corner shop, you can sell your products to customers anywhere in the world. That's fine until someone places an order in Tibet.

People who buy on the Internet tend to buy in a hurry – and so they expect goods to be delivered in a hurry. If the products (documents, software, etc) can be downloaded from a Web site, that's not a problem. Since you're selling books, CDs and videos, that's less easy – and major e-stores, such as Amazon, have set high standards for customers.

Make sure you set realistic expectations. Don't boast '24-hour delivery' if you know that you have no way of achieving that, other than for UK customers. Also, make it clear how much customers will need to pay, according to how much they buy and where they are located. It is frustrating to purchase a discount product from a Web site, only to find that shipping costs make it more expensive than the local high street price. Over-promising is a guaranteed way to sell once to a customer – and never again.

Delivery (and even warehousing and distribution) can be outsourced, and companies such as Parcel Force, DHL and TNT will provide your customers with online tracking of their orders. Although there is plenty of choice in this highly competitive market, it is worth selecting a reliable service, rather than a cheap one. Lost goods will probably cost you a lost customer

SECURITY FEARS

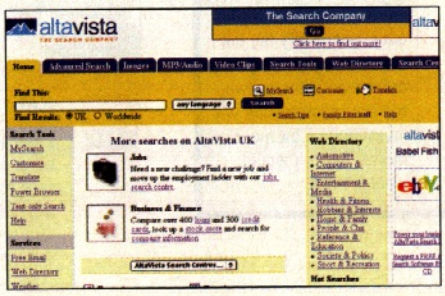
Q My online store is listed on Yahoo!, AltaVista and Google but still only gets around 50 hits a day. What can I do to get more traffic from these search engines?

Al Crook

A It is important distinguish between search engines (such as AltaVista and Google) and directories (such as Yahoo!). Directories draw their listings from descriptions submitted by you. An editor will review your site and might edit your report. This summary will serve as your site's listing – if it makes it into the listing at all. Gaining success with search engines, however, is much more of a 'black art'.

A true search engine creates its listings from the content of your pages. You usually submit a URL or two and the search engine then visits your Web pages and uses a series of algorithms to decide how your site should be ranked and classified. It is therefore unlikely that a one-off submission will get you anywhere near the top of most search engines. Why should it, when there are millions of sites to review? Although you could pay for a specialist service to push you up the ratings, I suggest you try the simply solutions first.

Search engines usually check whether the search terms you submitted appear in the title of your page and the first few lines of text. So, incorporate relevant words in the title and ensure your copy gets to the point straight away. □



Ad banners that sell!

How to: Use AdvertWizard to put together a successful advertising banner campaign and attract more visitors to your Web site

ENTICING VISITORS TO your site can be hard work. Even after submitting your URL to as many search engines as you can find, shouting your Web address out of the window to passers-by, and sticking posters all around town to advertise your online business, you still might not be getting the traffic you want. But there is something else you can try: creating and disseminating advertising banners across the Net. AdvertWizard is one such online service that takes your ad banners and swaps it with all of the other sites that have subscribed.

There are two services available on AdvertWizard. The first is for anyone, and is ideal for personal Web sites that just want to generate a little extra traffic. It's completely free to use. The idea is that for every banner you host on your site, you earn a free advert yourself, which is then served automatically on another site. You can take this preference, or you can instead opt to be paid a small amount of money for each advert that you host on your site.

The second option is geared towards online businesses, as it enables you to target specific sites upon which to place your banners. The cost for this service starts at £5 (excluding VAT), and this charge means that not only do you not have to host anyone else's adverts on your own site, but that you can also determine which type of sites host your banner ads.

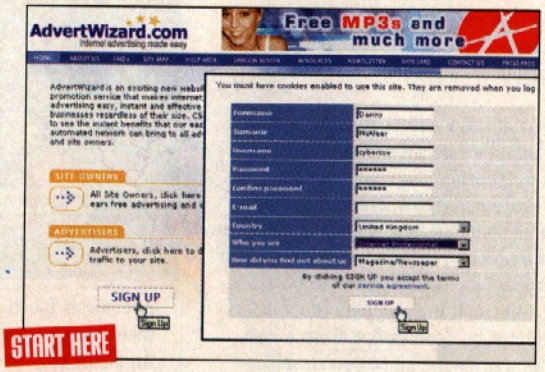
HOW IT WORKS

Banner ad campaigns

Buying a campaign is just one way that you can use AdvertWizard's services. This particular method allows you to target your audience more specifically, choosing sites within a particular channel or broad subject matter, as well as determining the time of day that your advert is shown, and to ensure the audience is country-specific, too.

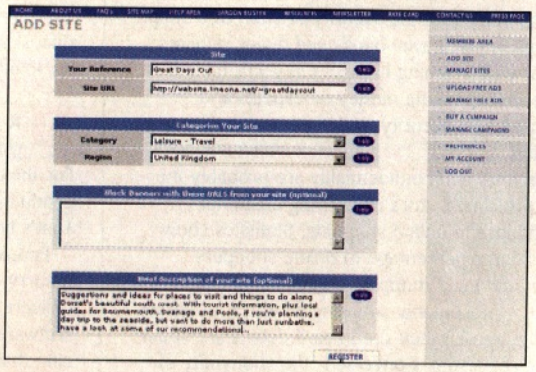
You can also use the management tools on the AdvertWizard Web site to monitor the success of each banner ad; to determine what sort of advertisements work best on which types of sites, and when. You can then use this information to mount a second, more refined campaign.

The minimum spend on a campaign is £5.88 (including VAT), and for this you get over 800 page impressions. This is just enough to give you a fair indication of how successful your campaign could potentially be, but in order to make it last more than a day or two, the site recommends you invest quite a bit more money (well, it would, wouldn't it?).



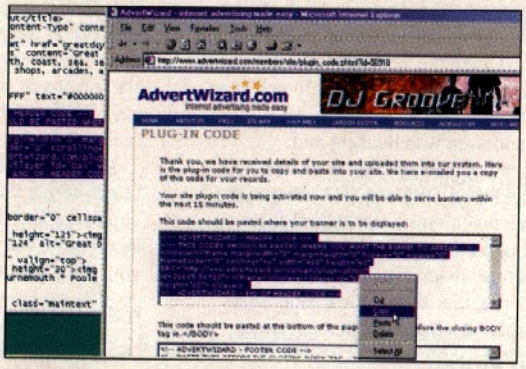
1 Create an account

For either the free or subscription service, you still need to sign-up first. Log on to **www.advertwizard.com**, and click on the 'Sign up' link. Fill in the form, choosing a username and password, and then press the 'Sign up' button once more.



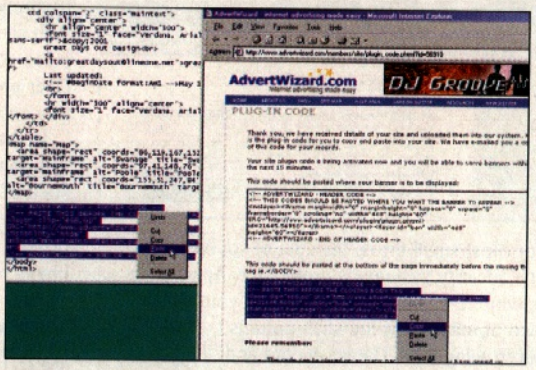
2 Define your site

Click on 'Add site' and enter a reference name for your site, and its URL. Using the pull-down menus, choose a category and region. If you want to block a banner from a particular URL, enter it into the space (one per line), and then write a brief description about your site in the box below.



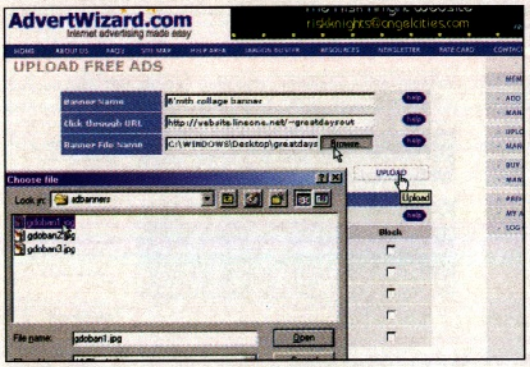
3 Get the HTML

Press 'Register' to submit your site. You'll then be given two segments of HTML to paste into your document. Select all of the first section, and press 'Control' and 'C' to copy it. Open your Web page in Notepad and find the start of the <BODY> section, and press 'Control' and 'V'.



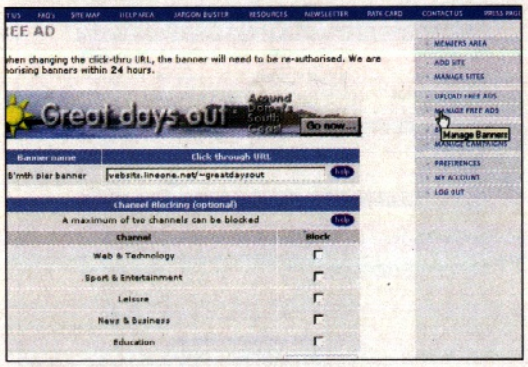
4 Adding ads to your site

Next, copy the second section of HTML from the AdvertWizard site, and then scroll down to the bottom of your Web page. Set the cursor just before the closing <\/BODY> tag, and then press 'Control' and 'V' to paste in the final segment of code. Save and upload your updated page.



5 Upload your own banners

If you're using the free ad option, click on the 'Upload Free Ads' button. On that page, enter a name for your banner, and then the click-through URL (your home page). Press 'Browse' and choose your banner image, then press 'Upload'. Repeat for your other banners.

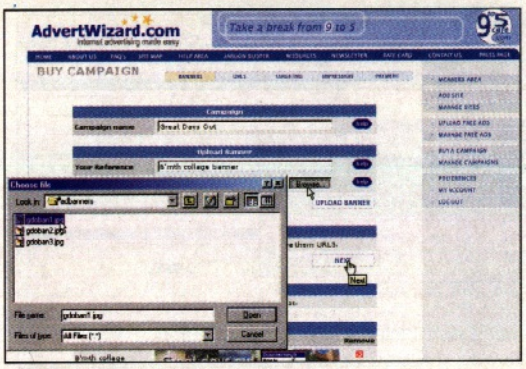


6 Manage your ad banners

You'll have to wait for authorisation before you can manage or edit any of your banners, or they're used on others' sites. In the meantime, if you've uploaded your updated page, you will be earning page impressions. See 'Manage Free Ads' for your account details.

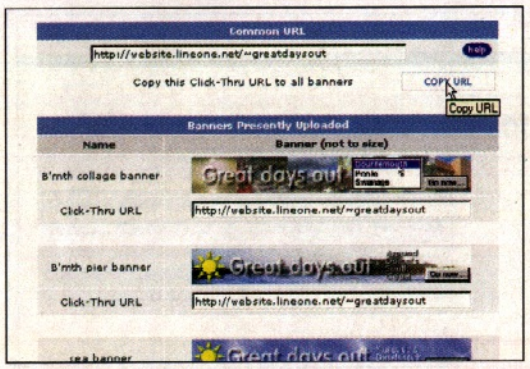
7 Premium service

Each time someone visits your site, you gain an additional impression for your own banners. However, if you want to top up the number of impressions, or want to better determine where your ads appear, click on the 'Buy a campaign' link, then on the 'Buy a campaign' button.



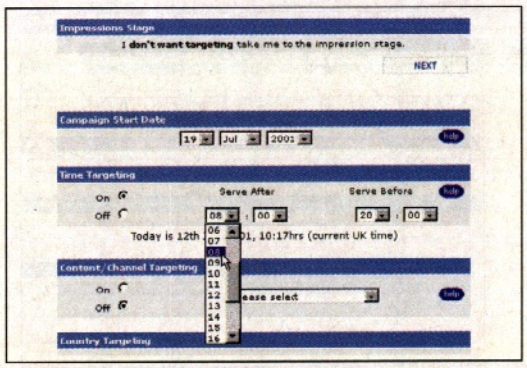
8 Set up a campaign

As with the free ad banners scheme, the first step is to give your campaign a title, and then upload each of the banners that you plan to use (you can use existing banners if they have been authorised). Press 'Next' when you've uploaded all the banners.



9 Linking your banner ads

On the next page you can assign separate URLs to each of the banners that you've uploaded (for different sections of your site, for example). Otherwise, just enter the common URL into the top space and then press 'Copy URL'. Press 'Next' to continue.



10 Target an audience

The next thing to do is to set where and when your adverts will appear in the 'targeting' page. Firstly, you can set the start date of your campaign (if you're about to re-launch the site in a few days' time, this is useful). You can also set what time your adverts are to appear during the day.

JARGON BUSTER

Page impression
The number of times that any individual Web page is accessed. Page impressions are often stored in a server log file, enabling the Web master to see which parts of the site are the most popular and, if banner ads are prominent on the site, which of these are getting the most coverage. A page impression however, neither guarantees that the person read the page, or if he or she saw the banner ads, merely that the page has been loaded into someone's Web browser.

Click-through
This is the name given to the act of clicking on a banner ad to jump to the advertiser's Web site. The number of times a banner ad is clicked upon is used to gauge how effective an advert it is. It is also used to determine the amount of commission to which the host of the banner ad is entitled.

Targeting
A marketing term, meaning: to specifically direct your advertising, or to design a product especially at a particular group of people. In the case of banner adverts, this means ensuring your ads only appear on sites with a similar subject matter or content group. In Web terminology however, it refers to the page, site or file to which a link is made.

TOP TIP!

Creating great banners
You should optimise the graphics you intend to use as banner ads. The longer it takes to load, the more likely it is that your visitors will leave. It's also annoying to have to wait for ads to download. There are plenty of optimisation tools for graphics formats such as Fireworks and Paint Shop Pro, and on the Web (www.jpegwizard.com, for example).

ONLINE RESOURCES

Ad Designer
www.advertwizard.addesigner.com
Part of the AdvertWizard network, this service helps you to create your own banners, enabling you to choose from a large library of preset graphics on which to place your own company logo or text.

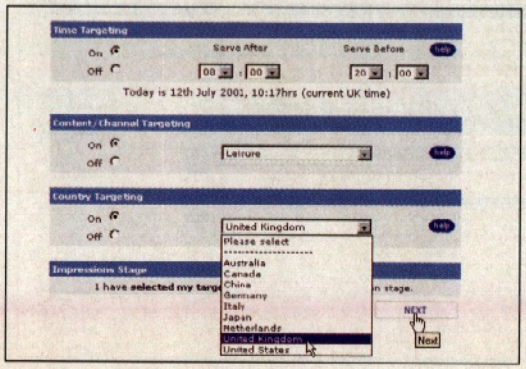
Web Review
www.webreview.com/1998/04_17/strategists/04_17_98_5.shtml
As well as offering ten useful tips for designing the ideal ad banner, you'll also find links to other interesting articles on Web advertising on this site.

Wilson Internet
www.wilsonweb.com/webmarket/banner-design.htm
A huge list of links to articles pertaining to ad banners. Everything from subjective comment to useful tips and tutorials are featured in this list.

Internet Advertising Bureau
www.iab.net/iab_banner_standards/bannersource.html
The IAB's site publishes all the recommended sizes and formats for all-manner of Web advertising, from traditional banners to pop-up boxes.

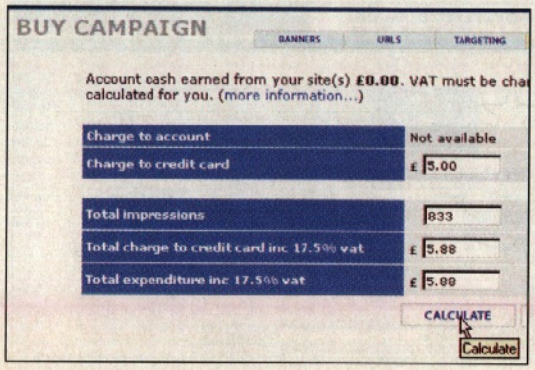
TOP TIP!

Compatible banners
When designing banners from scratch, try to adhere to the standard sizes. The most popular dimensions are 468 pixels wide by 60 pixels high, and is the only banner size permitted by AdvertWizard (although half size banner ads measuring 234 x 60 are commonplace). Allowable file formats for banner ads with AdvertWizard are JPEG, GIF (static or animated) or PNG format, none of which must exceed 15Kb in size.



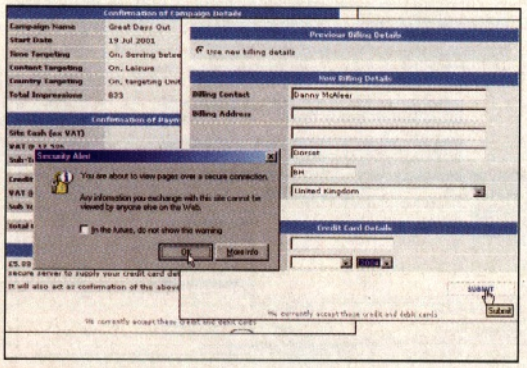
11 Refine your customer base

The final two settings are perhaps the more useful. These decide what sites your adverts will appear on (a feature unavailable for the free option), both in terms of content or channel, and geographic location. Make your choices from the pull-down menu and press 'Next'.



12 Name your price

You now have to decide how much you want to pay (the more you do, the more impressions you can have). If you have earned any commissions from impressions for adverts on your site, they will be credited here. Type the amount you want to pay, and press 'Calculate'.

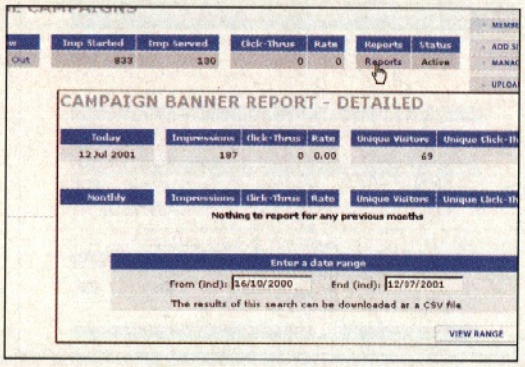


13 Paying for it

If you're happy with the quote and the number of impressions you've bought, click on the 'Next' button and check the confirmation details before continuing to the payments page. On the next page, fill in your address and credit card details.

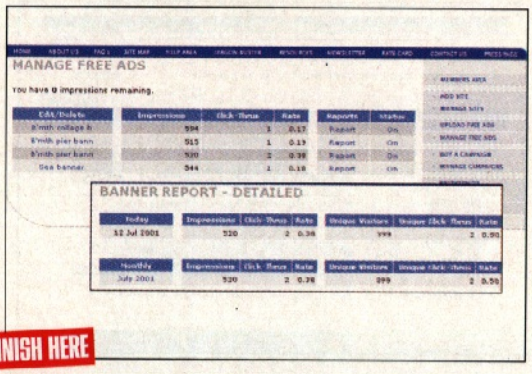
14 Campaign's underway

You will have to wait a while for your campaign to be activated. Once this happens, an email will be sent to you. Then, you can log back onto the site and click on the 'Manage Campaigns' button to edit the banners, or to view your click-through statistics.



15 See the results

If you click on the 'Report' link, you can see which of your banners have been served, and the click-through rate of each. By checking the box next to the banner ad entry, and pressing 'Submit', you can get a cumulative result of your advertising campaign.



FINISH HERE

16 Managing free ads

With the free ad service, you can view the page impressions and click-through ratios of each of the banners you upload. Also, if you click on the actual name, you can edit the click-through URL, block a channel, or delete the banner.

Memories fade.
Make sure your pictures don't.

Your pictures may well be the only records you have of some events. Lose them and you lose more than just a photographic image. So it's important to make sure your prints stand the test of time. HP Colorfast Photo Paper is designed to be lightfast for up to seventeen years. Specialist coatings ensure your pictures will last even after your memories of the events fade. Use HP Colorfast Photo Paper and HP inkjet cartridges and you have an imaging system that gives you the look and feel of a 'real' photograph. A result that will be crystal clear now, and when your grandchildren see it. Contact your local HP supplies stockist for details of the extensive range of photo inkjet media.

hp®
invent

08705 474 747 Tel/www **www.hp-go-supplies.com**

Get 3 iss

13 ISSUES AND 13 CD ROMS FOR JUST

Claim one of these four AND receive three issues

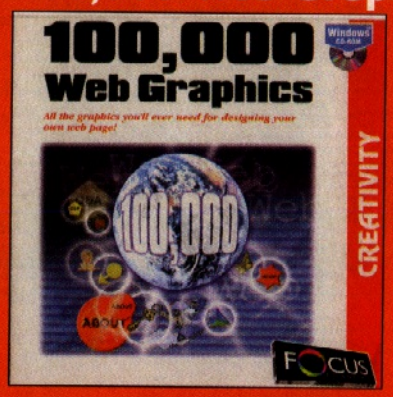
FREE! PICK ONE OF THESE GREAT CD-ROMS

Gifts are not offered with six month subscriptions

1,000 Professional Fonts

Create eye-catching logos and great-looking, professional text with this collection of top quality fonts. Load the fonts you want onto your PC and in a matter of seconds you'll be able add a touch of class to your Web pages. You'll find a huge range of fonts for every type of Web site – from flowery writing suitable for gardening sites, to smart and sophisticated characters better suited to business sites, it's all here in this impressive font collection.

100,000 Web Graphics

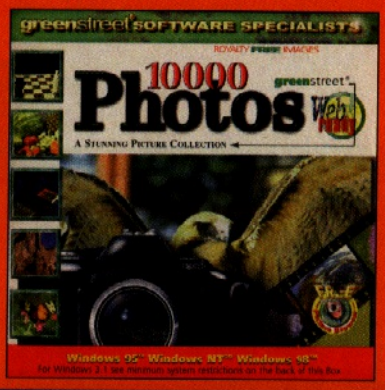


Bring your Web pages to life with this fabulous collection of 100,000 Web graphics. This CD comes complete with buttons, bullets, arrows, lines and icons plus hundreds of royalty-free clipart images for personal use. There are also 500 animated clipart images. Whether you're a beginner to or an advanced surfer, you'll never find customising your site simpler. Easy to follow steps guide you through using the graphics.

Xoom Web Page Power Pack

You'll find virtually everything you need here to create high impact Web pages quickly and easily. It's a suite of powerful tools that let you create and maintain your Web pages like the professionals! It includes Web Snake, a set of Internet tools you can use to download a Web site for offline browsing, plus GIF Animator, an image compression tool, and Web Site Starter Kit, a collection of more than 50 complete Web sites for you to use.

10,000 Photos



If you intend to use photos on your Web site, this stunning collection is a must. Offering a wide range of top quality, full colour images, it covers subjects as diverse as the animal world, technology, eCommerce, food and terrain. All the images are royalty-free so you can rest assured that you won't get into legal hot water over copyright. Whatever image you need is here. They're all easily accessed and can be quickly resized.

subscribe!

GET AN AMAZING DEAL!

ues free!

£36 - SAVING YOU OVER £15

great free gifts free*

PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT AND SAVE A FURTHER 10%

* when you subscribe for a year

Call our credit card hotline on 01454 642442, fax us on 01454 620080 or email us at pi@cisubs.co.uk

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO SUBSCRIBE TO PRACTICAL INTERNET

PI0158

PERSONAL DETAILS

Your name

Address

Post code Email

Phone number Date of Birth

SUBSCRIPTION AS A GIFT

Name

Address

Post code Email

Phone number Date of Birth

YOUR CHOICE OF FREE GIFT

☐ 1000 professional fonts ☐ 100,000 Web graphics

☐ Xoom Web page powerpack ☐ 10,000 photos

PARAGON PUBLISHING

Please return this order form or a photocopy of it together with your cheque/PO (if applicable) to the following address: **Paragon Publishing Ltd, FREEPOST (SWB1565), Patchway, BRISTOL, BS32 0ZZ.**

From time to time, Paragon sends out news about exciting new products and opportunities that are of interest to readers. If you do not wish to receive such information, please tick this box. ☐

PAYMENT DETAILS

1. Direct Debit

☐ UK only £8.10 every 3 months – SAVE AN EXTRA 10%

PARAGON PUBLISHING

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

DIRECT Debit

Please fill in the form and send it to: Paragon Publishing Ltd, Freepost (SWB1565), Patchway, Bristol, BS32 0ZZ

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The manager Bank/Building Society

Address

Postcode

Name(s) of account holder(s)

Branch sort code

Bank/Building society account number

Originator's Identification Number: 8 5 1 4 1 2

Reference Number

Instructions to your Bank or Building society
Please pay Paragon Publishing Ltd Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Paragon Publishing Ltd and, if so, details will be passed on electronically to my Bank/Building society

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account

A6 instruction form

2. Cheque/credit/debit card

☐ UK £36 for 13 issues ☐ Europe £55 for 13 issues ☐ World £81 for 13 issues

☐ UK £18 for 6 issues ☐ Europe £28 for 6 issues ☐ World £41 for 6 issues

☐ Cheque (£'s sterling made payable to Paragon Publishing Ltd)

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex ☐ Switch ☐ Delta

Card number:

Expiry date: – Issue No:

Signed: Date:

Domain name registration

Web hosting

E-commerce solutions

flight attendant

Starter Plan
An ideal package for those 'new to the web'. The package contains all the features you will need to design a professional looking website.
- 10MB disk space
- 500 MB data transfer / month
- 2 POP 3 mail boxes
- 5 email forwarding options
- FTP support
- FrontPage extensions
- Form to email scripts

Designer Plan
With a CGI bin and a range of self-installing scripts you can design a professional looking, interesting and interactive web site.
- 20MB disk space
- 2000MB data transfer / month
- CGI bin
- 10 POP 3 mail boxes
- 20 email forwarding options
- Perl script checker
- Free self installing scripts
- Free FrontPage extensions

E-Commerce
Get your complete e-business up and running with Verio hosting and technical support and the easy to use Actinic Catalog.
- 50MB disk space
- 4000MB data transfer / month
- CGI bin
- SSL secure server
- 10 POP 3 mail boxes
- 20 email forwarding options
- Excite search engine
- Online chat facility
- Actinic Catalog v 4.0

From registering your domain name to hosting complete database and e-commerce solutions, Verio will see that you make a flying start on the Internet. Our services are designed to provide you with a solid platform for getting your ideas off the ground. Whatever your level of expertise, we have the solution to suit you – with online support and technical advisors to guide you through any turbulence.

Domain Saver
The first step is to choose a domain name, Verio will check availability and register that name on your behalf. We will park the domain on our servers and give you email forwarding options. You will also receive a discount when you take up one of our web hosting plans.

contact us now on:

0800 917 9069

www.verio.co.uk
info@verio.co.uk

VERIO
United Kingdom

Control Panel – your unique online control panel gives you a fast and easy way to change email setting and numerous hosting options.

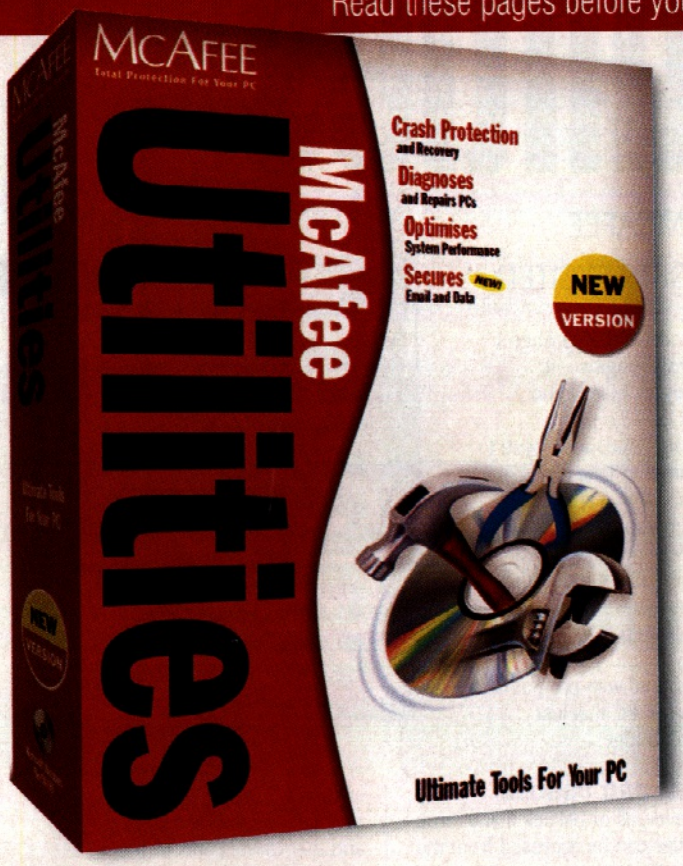
Telephone Support – from sales advisors to free technical support, all your worries or requirements will be swiftly dealt with.

Verio Guarantee – we offer a 30 day money back guarantees and short contract lengths because we offer superior products and great service.

REVIEWS

Read these pages before you buy any new kit for your PC

13 PAGES OF JARGON-FREE, PRACTICAL ADVICE



McAfee Utilities

We test out McAfee Utilities – essential software that will protect your PC – on page 118

Wacom Grafire2

Find about this graphics tablet on page 122

On test this issue...

HTML Tutor.....120

This CD aims to teach you the ins-and-outs of HTML, so you'll be able to code your own Web page

TextNow!.....120

If you can't, or won't, use mobile phones, TextNow! lets you send text messages from your PC

MediaStudio Pro 6.5.....121

As distributing video on the Net becomes more viable, we look at this excellent video editor

Photo Pro Deluxe.....121

Believe it or not, you can get a decent image editor for under ten pounds. Hooray for Photo Pro Deluxe

Wacom Grafire2.....122

Wacom's innovative mouse/graphics tablet allows you to combine artistic flair with everyday computer use

Iomega Zip 250.....124

The Zip disk has been a favourite method of transferring or backing up files. We look at its latest incarnation

Trust Spycam.....124

It's the digital camera that doubles up as a Web cam. It's also incredibly bloody small

DX3500.....125

Kodak's DX3500 is perfect for anyone wanting to buy a no-nonsense digital camera

PSC750.....125

It's a scanner, a printer and a photocopier all wrapped up in a lovely package

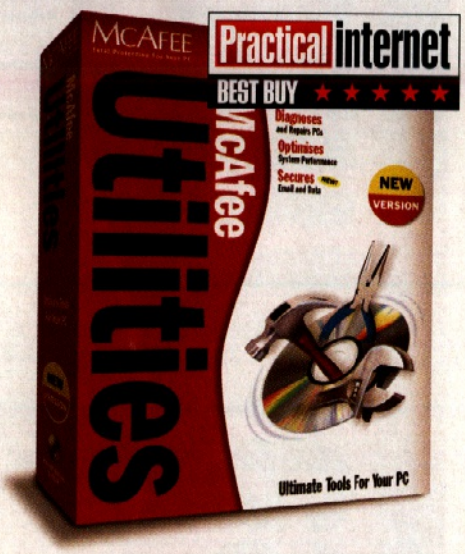
OUR REVIEWING SYSTEM

LOOK OUT FOR OUR 'BEST BUY' LOGO. THIS CHERISHED ACCOLADE IS ONLY AWARDED TO THE HIGHEST-SCORING PRODUCTS

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

McAfee Utilities

IT'S STILL INCREDIBLY EFFECTIVE. IT'S STILL CHEAP. MCAFEE UTILITIES IS NOW EVEN BETTER. **THOMAS WATSON** GETS EXCITED



Product: McAfee Utilities
Company: McAfee
Phone: 0800 092 7160
Price: £29.95
URL: www.mcafee-at-home.com

With each new version of Windows building even more functionality into the PC operating system, every update provides slightly more potential for disaster. Unlike the earliest incarnations of Windows, where what you saw was really all that you got, current versions have all manner of gadgetry and tricks behind the scenes to improve your PC experience.

Unfortunately, this can prove to be the downfall of even the most wizened of users. Before you know it, you've got 15-minute start-ups and random crashes blighting your life.

And this is why the utilities market is thriving. Apart from the incredible range of features that can be incorporated (with McAfee Utilities a prime case in point), installing one of these all-encompassing packages should save you the bother of having to worry about your PC again. Think of it as being similar to not only having your car serviced, but then being provided with an automatic braking system, mechanic and nurse, just to make sure that your car remains in perfect condition.

McAfee Utilities, with a ridiculously low price of £29.95, has so many mini-programs crammed into one package that you can't go wrong. The great thing about Utilities is that you don't need a computing degree to be able to run it. Everything is accessible to the beginner, yet the more advanced user will still find plenty to be getting on with.

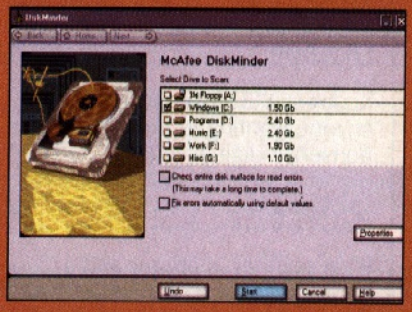
So, what do you get for your money? You get 20, count 'em, 20 different programs within one suite, all designed to maximise your PC's potential. What's more, this new version of Utilities builds on one of the package's main strengths – it operates quietly and efficiently in the background, and doesn't attempt to take out your family with a sniper gun when you try to uninstall it. Anyone who's used similar suites from other manufacturers will appreciate this, it's all too easy to find yourself lumbered with programs on your PC that just won't budge.

Pick and choose

As ever, all of Utilities many, erm, utilities can be accessed from the main 'Central' menu program. A major improvement in the package's functionality can be seen even before you've installed it, though. For this latest version of Utilities is the first that allows you to access the core programs direct from the CD. This means that you can troubleshoot after your disaster has occurred. Or in layman's terms, if your computer dies on you, you can rush out and buy Utilities and fix the problem without even installing it. And let's face it, 30 quid is nothing compared to complete system meltdown.

In the main interface, programs are divided into four handy sections, making it much more straightforward to find your way around. With commonsense titles like 'Repair and Recover', 'Clean

THREE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FEATURES OF UTILITIES

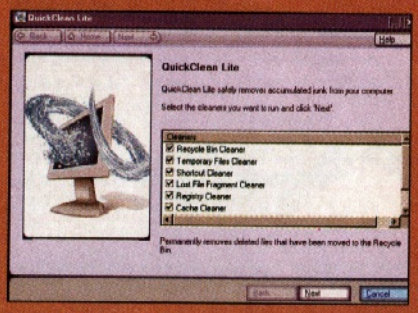


Disk Minder

Find out any of a number of problems blighting your hard drive. This is especially good at solving problems in the Windows directory, and therefore speeding up the Operating System itself. Problem files can quickly be banished forever.

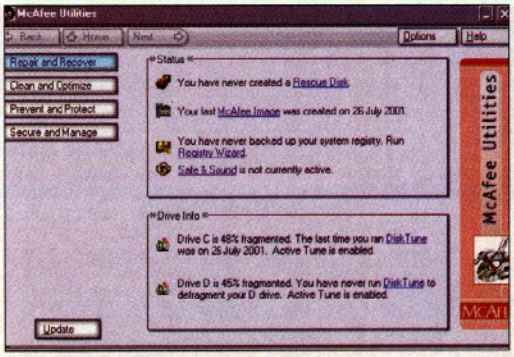
Safe & Sound

The best cure is prevention before attack, which is what Safe & Sound does. Backing up files that you work on automatically, you need never be caught short again by a crash.



QuickClean Lite

Want to improve the speed of your PC? Set QuickClean Lite going, and it bins Megabytes of useless information from various temp folders strewn across the Windows folder. A quick scan on our PC shaved 90Mb from our hard drive.



This is where all the action begins – the simple yet incredibly comprehensive Utilities Central

The beautiful interface of the First Aid program gives you an easy path to loads of helpful features and advice

and Optimize', 'Prevent and Protect' and 'Secure and Manage', you know exactly what you're getting into. As well as old favourites, like the comprehensive 'Discover Pro' to tell you everything you could ever know about your PC, Utilities Version 4.0 now possesses a collection of new features.

Control your PC

The 'McAfee TaskMaster' allows you to set up multiple start-up configurations, giving you far more control over the workings of your computer. This also works with the 'CTRL + ALT + DEL' keypress menu to enable more complex information about what is running at that moment in time. Pressing these keys will bring up the TaskMaster, instead of the standard Windows ShutDown window we're used to.

While Utilities has a fine defragmenter within its ample hands, it also now sports the ultimate in defragging tools. 'ActiveTune' prevents new files becoming fragmented, as they are created, ensuring your hard drive should be on tip-top behaviour at all times.

If the worst comes to the worst, you can use your McAfee Utilities disc as a bootable rescue CD. When your system won't start up, and you don't have a bootable floppy hand, this could well save your behind.

Spick-and-span

The improvements to McAfee Shredder and the inclusion of QuickClean Lite both show you how much gunk has accumulated on your hard drive recently. And rather than just show you the error of your ways, each of these delightful programs feature a fine collection of automated and user-initiated fixes to spruce up your system like no spring clean ever could.

But it's the old favourites which still do you more of a turn than anything else, though. Childish aesthetes that we are, the 'EZ Setup' never fails to impress. Working as a TweakUI type extension to Windows, this lets you alter all conceivable settings, from window opening speed to the logo displayed on startup, and provides hours of tinkering fun. The most useful of all is DiskMinder, which goes through your hard drive with a fine-toothed comb, and kills any nasty nits it finds in the process.

Add to this such gems as a CrashProtector and Guardian, and you're looking at the cleanest PC you've ever possessed in your life. And just in case you're extremely anally retentive and terrified of horrors, there's even an 'Image' program to ghost your system, so that any problems can quickly be eradicated with a simple flick of a switch.

If you've ever had any kind of problem with your PC (and if you haven't, why don't you switch it on and start using it for a change?), then there's something here that will be beneficial to you. Even if you simply want to keep your machine pristine, this is well worth a meagre £30, but the range of utilities offered here will tempt you into fixing things you never even knew existed, let alone were broken.

THE VERDICT

What's good:

Everything you could ever want to keep PC problems at bay

What's bad:

The temptation is there to fiddle a little too much with things that haven't yet gone wrong

Overall ★★★★★

MCAFEE UTILITIES RIVALS

OnTrack SystemSuite

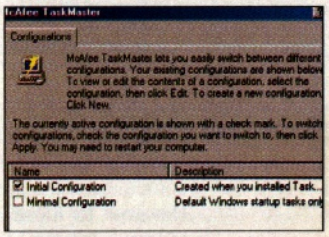
Weighing in at £54.99, this offering might not have the big name to back it up, but it has all the features you need for a happy PC. Virus scanning, crashproofing and a variety of Windows utilities are included.

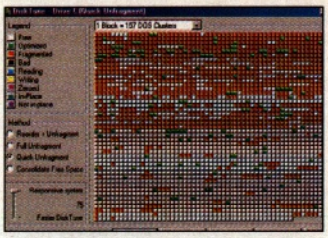
Norton SystemWorks

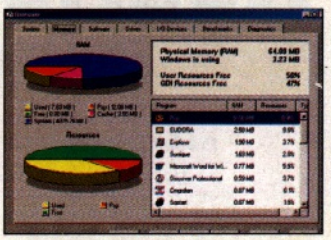
Okay, so it costs a hefty £80, but you know what you're getting with Norton – and that's a wealth of features. Everything under the sun is here, but you might find yourself picking bits of Norton out of your PC for months afterwards.

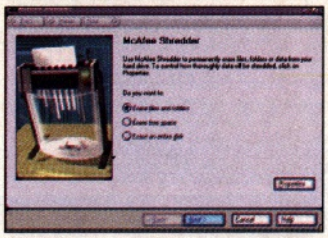
Ultra WinCleaner Utility Suite 2

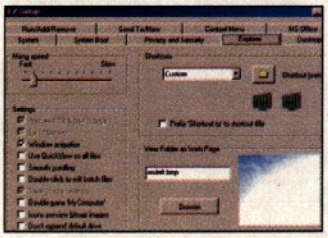
Priced in the reasonable £40 bracket and sporting a garish washing powder style box, this suite contains all of the standard applications, as well as a couple of nice ones to let you move programs around your hard drive more easily.





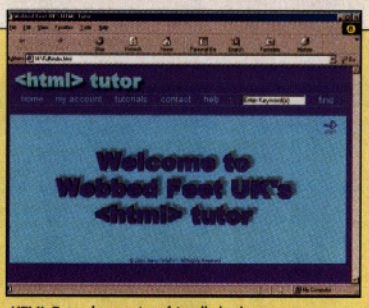




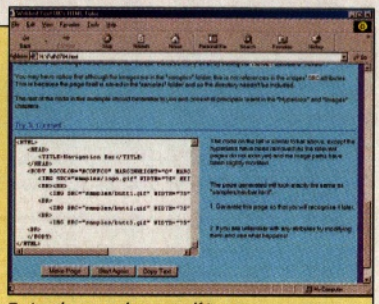


HTML Tutor

Learn HTML in no time with the help of Webbed Feet software tutor. Mark Shaw takes a look



HTML Tutor has a nice, friendly look


Trying the examples yourself is easy

Product: HTML Tutor
URL: www.webbedfeet.co.uk
Company: Webbed Feet
Price: £25

HAVING TO PHYSICALLY 'code' a Web site yourself is something of the past. However, for those who like to know what happens underneath their Web browser, this digital book may be for you.

Webbed Feet's HTML Tutor is basically a Web site on a CD that teaches you the ins and outs of HTML and all things Web design.

Loading the main page, you're presented with a fairly simple but pleasant Web site that is nice and accessible. After clicking through various induction pages, you are soon presented with an easy to read and understand beginners' guide to HTML.

Even someone who has never seen a Web site before would understand the basic concept due to the effective descriptions that author, Aaron Whiffin, has given.

Thorough content

Along with guides to tags, formatting and hyperlinks, there is a good explanation of what kind of images to use and how the various types are used. To make everything cruise along, the interactive HTML examples are easy to use and give instant results of your HTML attempts.

Unfortunately, at £25, this 'e-book' is somewhat overpriced, as doing a search on Google for the words 'online', 'HTML' and 'guide', will present you with endless Web sites that teach you how to do everything that this one does. And they win our vote with the ever important 'Free' tag. Various books are also available that teach you HTML from as little as £3.99.

This aside, however, Webbed Feet has provided a well made HTML tutor that provides a basic understanding of HTML tags through to simple JavaScript. Of course, it's more useful having it on a CD than as a Bookmark in your Web browser and the printable reference guides in pdf format are also very useful. It's just a shame that the price isn't halved.

THE VERDICT

What's good:
Looks nice and easy to use.

What's bad:
Well over-priced.

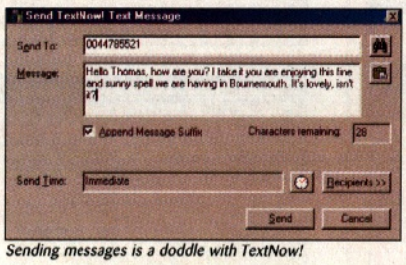
Overall ★★★☆☆

RedRock TextNow!

The world of text messaging need never be the sole preserve of teenagers, with this nifty piece of software, which lets you send messages over the Net for free

Product: TextNow!
URL: www.redrocksoftware.com
Company: RedRock Software
Price: £95. Free on our CD

UNLESS YOU'VE BEEN living on some distant uncivilised planet for the past couple of years, you can't really have failed to notice the huge increase in text messaging. Recent statistics would suggest that everyone in Britain dabbles in this newest form of communication. The problems with sending a text message are well-known and much-maligned – every time you pass on one of those cute smiley faces, your mobile phone service provider charges you about ten pence. What's more, it takes about five minutes for even the most nimble-fingered to type a message using those cumbersome keypads.



Sending messages is a doddle with TextNow!

And it's for these two reasons that PC-based messaging is such a boon. Loads of sites offering this service have popped up recently, but TextNow! is one of the few software packages we've seen to do it.

Sending your message

After a surprisingly long installation process, TextNow! kicks into life by disappearing to the system tray. A swift right-click on this brings up your options. To send a text message, simply enter the relevant number in the box, then your message. You'll notice how little space you have (it is Short Message Service after all), and how easy it is to type your 160 characters in no time. Click on 'Send', and it's there.

TextNow! also features a handy phone book function to let you store your numbers, as well as a chance to enter a reply phone number on every text you send.

If you find the hassle of sending text messages on a mobile phone irritating, then this is perfect for you.

THE VERDICT

What's good:
Alleviates the problems of mobile texting. It's free

What's bad:
Nothing much really

Overall ★★★★☆

MediaStudio Pro 6.5

This non-linear video editor has made quite an impression with its users. See what it has to offer

Product: MediaStudio Pro 6.5
company: Ulead
Price: TBA
URL: www.ulead.co.uk

AS THE BROADBAND bandwagon continues to trundle along nicely, distributing video on the Internet has finally become viable. The latest version of MediaStudio Pro gives you the chance to mastermind your meteoric rise to becoming the next Tim Burton or James Cameron.

The software is basically a blend six components including video capture and editing, audio editing, video painting and powerful motion graphics. The video editor now supports the latest technology for creating RealVideo, Windows Media and QuickTime files to publish on the Web. However, the killer feature for many will be the DVD authoring tool which lets you output video to the format of the moment, complete with scene menus, navigation buttons and nifty video introductions.

Making movies

When it comes to actually putting your movie together, the editor's intuitive user interface poses no problems. One of the reasons for this is the new Storyboard folder which allows you to view, arrange and overlap thumbnails of clips from different tracks before you get round to dropping them onto the Timeline.

Another great new feature of this version of MediaStudio is the Voiceover Recording feature. This lets you 'lay down' a narrative voice track over a project whilst viewing playback in real-time. As a result you can time your commentary perfectly with the action within the video to add a more polished feel to the piece.

Obviously, newcomers to the world of non-linear editing may struggle to grasp some of the software's concepts and principles. However, the software turns in an Oscar-winning performance for enthusiasts interested in getting professional-looking post-production results without having to pay studio-level prices.

THE VERDICT

What's good:
Pools several powerful video creation tools into one desktop editing environment

What's bad?:
May baffle video editing virgins

Overall ★★★★☆

Softkey Print Shop Photo Pro Deluxe

A decent image editor for under a tenner? Surely not...

Product: Photo Pro Deluxe
Company: Softkey
Price: £9.99
URL: www.learning.co.uk

WITH QUITE A few photo-editing packages kicking around on the market, Web pioneers have more choice than ever over how they tinker with their pictures.

If you want the best, then you're going to have to shell out £500, but you'll find yourself still finding new features three years after you bought it. The lucrative 'cheapie' market has been near saturated recently, with the world and his brother launching a package for under £50. This is the cheapest we've seen so far, but does it cut the mustard?

Well, much to our surprise, it's actually quite good. Okay, it's not a world-beater, but it'll provide the perfect introduction to image manipulation. The interface is well designed, making for user-friendly and problem-free navigation. It's difficult to go wrong with the large buttons marked clearly with both easily apparent function icons and text.

Price limitations

For such a silly price, you won't be surprised to learn that Photo Pro Deluxe has more than its fair share of limitations. Our reviewer was less than chuffed with the rotation quality, which led to some nasty jagged edges on straight lines.

You do get a hefty collection of filters and effects, all of which work as well as you'd expect. And if you're totally new to the field, these enable you to turn even the most bland of photographs into a work of art (or something incredibly hideous). There's even a nice morphing section, allowing you to push and pull the faces of your loved ones into a variety of disturbing shapes.

If you've got a tenner spare, and you don't have an image editor, it's worth giving this one a try.

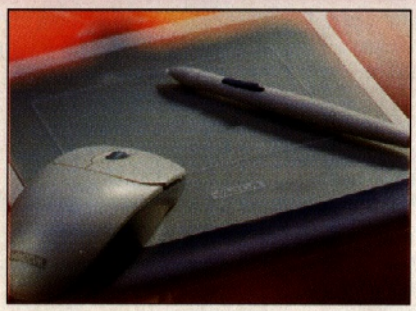
THE VERDICT

What's good:
It only costs a tenner. Surprisingly good, with a decent variety of features and a nice interface

What's bad?:
Some of the features are a little dodgy in execution

Overall ★★★★☆

Wacom Grafire 2



COMBINE ARTISTIC FLAIR WITH EVERYDAY COMPUTER OPERATION. **MARTIN PIPE** GIVES YOU THE LOWDOWN ON WACOM'S INNOVATIVE MOUSE/GRAPHICS TABLET

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

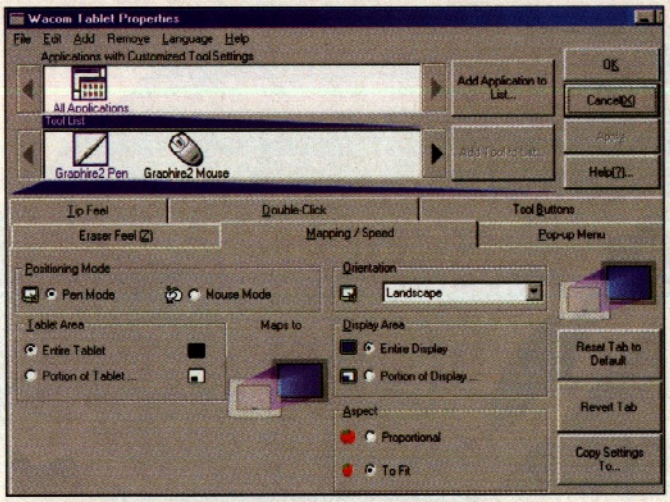
Product: Grafire 2
Company: Wacom
Contact: Computers Unlimited
Phone: 020 8200 8282
Price: £75
URL: www.unlimited.co.uk

Whether you're a Web designer, or just have an artistic flair, the Grafire 2 should appeal to you. It's an A6 graphics tablet that can be partnered with one of two input devices – both of which are supplied in the package. You can choose from a mouse or a wand depending on the type of application being run on your computer. Switching between them is automatic, so there's no need to worry about reconfiguring driver settings. The device interfaces to your computer via USB. This has allowed Wacom to make the Grafire 2 dual-platform. It comes supplied with drivers, control panels and software for both Mac and PC. Good news if you have both platforms, or plan to migrate from one to the other. You also get Mac and PC versions of Corel's Painter Classic, a well-specified painting and drawing program that is capable of some surprisingly life-like results. Painter Classic is obviously intended for use with the wand part of the package. This pen-like device isn't fettered by any wires, and so you don't get all tangled up while you're trying to create your artistic masterpiece. The wand can be stored in a holder, which clips onto the back of the tablet. It's rather a loose fit, though, and the stowed wand might get in the way when you're using the mouse.

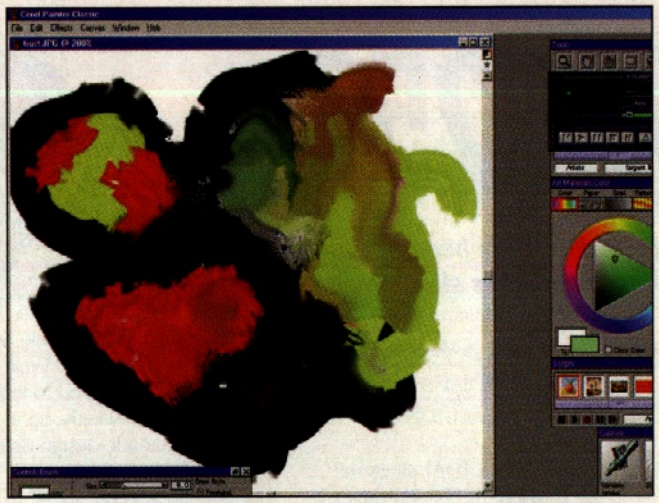
Using the software that comes with the tablet, you can easily alter the stylus (also known as pencil) settings to suit your requirements

Magical wand

On the side of the wand is the 'duoswitch', which consists of two buttons arranged in a 'rocker' formation. These can be programmed to deliver mouse button-like functionality. Pressing the wand on the tablet, meanwhile, has the same effect as a mouse's left button, and can thus be used to select items or open windows. Quickly tapping the tablet twice with the wand tip achieves the same end as a mouse 'double-click'. We're pleased to report that the wand is, like those supplied with vastly more-expensive graphics tablets, pressure-sensitive. If you're using a drawing program, for example, the thickness of the line is influenced by the downwards pressure exerted. Other pressure-sensitive parameters could, depending on the application, include colour, exposure or opacity. Pressure-sensitivity is automatically supported by many programs; in addition to the supplied Painter Classic, the list includes Photoshop, Corel Draw and Freehand. As a tool for drawing and editing/retouching images, the wand excels. It's far more natural than a mouse, and gives you greater control when freehand-sketching or cropping parts of a photo. In some



The detailed, yet easy-to-use software gives you complete control over every feature of the Wacom Grafire 2 – from the size of the tablet area to the speed at which the pen and mouse can be used on the tablet. You'll have it mastered in minutes.



Messy goo or ingenious art? You decide. Whatever your ability, the Grafire 2's software lets you create personalised 'masterpieces' in minutes. A full set of colour handling and brush tools make the tablet easy to handle.

programs, you can 'erase' unwanted areas of your image simply by using the other end of the wand. Just as intuitive as a good old pencil with built-in rubber, then! Note that the eraser function is also pressure-sensitive, depending on which program you're using.

Absolute precision

In wand mode, 'absolute' cursor positioning is selected by default. Here, the tablet's active area is 'mapped' to your computer screen. Whenever the pen is placed on the tablet, the cursor 'jumps' to the corresponding point on-screen. Absolute positioning makes the tracing of images possible. Wacom acknowledges this fact with its 'transparent overlay' which is a sturdy plastic film secured to the tablet at one end. Place an image under here, holding it into position, and you'll be able to trace it with the wand. Using the wand as a mouse-substitute can, however, be rather fatiguing. For everyday PC operation, you're directed towards the mouse. This device, which looks like any other mouse, is of an 'ambidextrous' design and will thus be equally at home among left and right-handed users.

Wacom's mouse is of the 'scrolling' variety, in which a detented wheel is mounted between the two buttons. The feature emulates Microsoft's Intellimouse, and should thus work with all compatible software. The scrolling wheel is useful for Web site navigation, and certainly worked well with Internet Explorer. Just as with the Intellimouse, the number of lines skipped per detent can be set through the driver software.

Quick on the draw

The Grafire employs inductive coupling to not only send positioning information to the tablet, but also transmit power to the wand/mouse circuitry. Other cordless mice derive their power from internal batteries, which have the knack of running out when you've got to send an urgent email! Hats off, then, to Wacom's eco-friendly alternative. Another advantage of Wacom's design is that it doesn't use a ball, so there's nothing to get dirty or limit accuracy. Indeed, the claimed resolution is 1000dpi, which compares favourably with that of conventional mice.

In all, the Grafire worked well at both jobs. Note that although the mouse isn't fettered by wires, it won't work outside the tablet area. As a result, a 'pick-up and slide' movement will be needed to get to one side of the desktop to another. Such activity is possible through the 'relative' positioning of the mouse mode (here, any cursor movement is from its current on-screen position). Computer owners used to conventional rodents may find this rather strange, certainly to begin with. Fortunately, you can use your conventional mouse simultaneously. If you plan to do this, however, don't leave the mouse or wand on or near the tablet. If you do, cursor positioning may be rather erratic! In all, though, the Wacom Grafire 2 is a versatile piece of kit and represents excellent value for money.

Pop-up palettes on your desktop give you fast access to image scripts that control backgrounds, while the brush tools let you add Picasso-like touches.

WHY USE A TABLET?

IF YOUR HOME page is image-intensive – as most are these days – we would recommend the purchase of a wand-based graphics tablet. They're far more suited to image-related work than mice, enabling you to be more productive. Defining selections is dead easy. In Photoshop, for example, you can physically 'draw' a marquee around the wanted object or section with its 'lasso' tool. Wands can be used intuitively like 'real-world' paintbrushes or pencils when marking an image in some way. By placing a drawing on the tablet, it can be traced on-screen. Not as accurate as scanning the drawing, but the overall effect can be quite charming from an artistic viewpoint. In addition to being more 'natural' drawing tools than mice, wands are also much more accurate with no 'slippage'. The better models have pressure-sensitivity. In other words, press the pen harder on the tablet surface and the line you're drawing gets bolder or thicker.

THE VERDICT

What's good:
Flexible, price, works well

What's bad:
Feels odd to use at first!

Overall ★★★★★

Zip 250

The Zip drive has been around for years, but it's never been as slimline and sleek as this

Contact: Iomega
URL: www.iomega.com
Phone: n/a
Price: £179.99

IT SEEMS THAT since the dawn of the PC Zip drives have been providing portable storage solutions to punters wanting more than the meagre 1.4Mb offered on a traditional floppy. The CD-R drive has taken chunks out of the market, but the Zip drive is still going strong.

The latest version of the device has lost a little weight, and now sports a fine slimline look. In fact, the Zip drive is nothing more than a shadow of its former self, boasting a profile measuring around half of the previous bulk. So what, you might say? Well, older models tended to look clunky and unwieldy, so a new ergonomic design does nothing but inspire confidence in quality.

Own power source

Long ago, Iomega began producing a 250Mb model, as well as the now standard 100Mb version. Working pretty much like a bulkier, faster floppy disk, the Zip disk made it possible to copy large chunks of data easier than ever before.

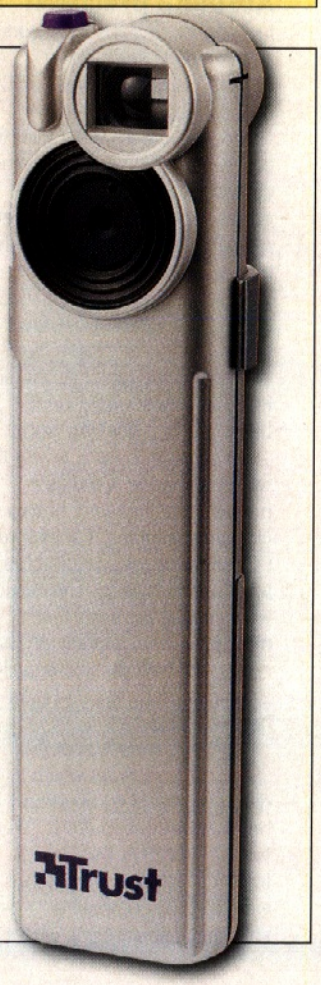
Apart from looking better, the new version of the Zip drive boasts one major improvement. While standard external drives are accepted as requiring their own power supply to get up and running, Iomega has taken a wholly different stance here. Now 'host powered', the Zip 250 operates as soon as you plug it into the USB connector. No power supply is needed, for the Zip 250 gets all it needs direct from the USB itself.

THE VERDICT

Features	★★★★☆
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Value	★★★☆☆
Overall	★★★★☆

Trust Spycam

Enter a secret world of James Bond wannabes with the aid of this digital camera



Contact: Trust
URL: www.trust.com
Phone: 0800 328 0261
Price: £59.95

WITH SUCH A quality name, you won't be surprised to learn that the Trust Spycam offers you the chance to take a sneaky pic or two of unsuspecting people. Primarily, though, it operates as a budget digital camera, albeit with a bizarre shape.

The Spycam is so small and slim that it can fit neatly into a pocket, ready for the time when it needs to be whipped out for some urgent photographic action. Most importantly of all, operating the Spycam is ridiculously easy. The slimline cam features two buttons, from which you can access all options, and take your pictures, too. The first button, by the viewfinder, allows you to cycle through the various options available to you (for £60, you're not looking at a wealth here), while the button on the top does the snapping.

All this and more

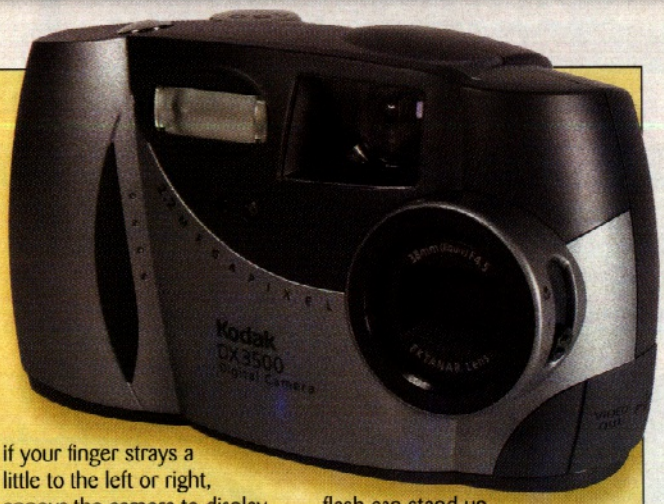
Once you've taken your shots, all that's required is for you to plug your cam into the USB socket of your PC, and you're ready to drag your images across. And just when you're on the verge of keeling over with the joy your £60 wonder brings to you, we can also tell you that it works as a Web cam too. Just make sure you've copied all of your pictures off the camera before you turn to Web cam action, or you can wave goodbye to them, forever.

The Spycam even comes supplied with a good range of software, including Ulead Photo Express 3 and Cool 360. For so little money, you can't really go wrong.

THE VERDICT

Features	★★★☆☆
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Overall	★★★★☆

DX3500



Take digital photos in a flash with Kodak's latest snapper

Contact: Kodak
Phone: 0870 243 0270
Price: £299
URL: www.kodak.co.uk

SINCE KODAK FIRST started knocking out cameras at the turn of the last century, it's specialised in providing a cheap and easy means of taking photographs.

The idea behind the DX3500 follows this no-nonsense philosophy. You just push the button and the electronics does the rest. The brains behind the device is the camera dock, a cradle that combines a battery charger and PC connection, allowing you to hook up to a USB port and feed your images into your computer at the push of a button.

The DX3500 is an idiot's delight as the controls have been kept to a bare minimum. The problem lies with the fact that because it is just so darn simple, there's very little scope to tinker with the settings. The camera's only truly creative control is the choice of flash mode, and even this defaults back to Auto whenever you turn it off.

D-day

Another niggling aspect is the operation of the D-pad which, if your finger strays a little to the left or right, annoys the camera to display the previous shot instead of zooming in or out. After a while, this becomes highly frustrating. As with many other digicams, the 1.8-inch LCD display is practically invisible on a sunny day and the optical viewfinder doesn't zoom, so it's a case of 'hit and hope' when framing shots.

Having said this, the camera is by no means a flop and the 2.2 megapixel CCD can capture a clear, crisp image with vivid colours. The flash can stand up to the job as well.

Forming part of Kodak's 'EasyShare' range, the camera makes a good buy for digicam rookies or anyone that doesn't want to use too much of their grey matter when taking digital snaps.

THE VERDICT

Features	★★☆☆☆
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Value	★★★☆☆
Overall	★★★☆☆

PSC 750

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

Printing has never been so much fun thanks to the multi-purpose PSC 750

Company: Hewlett Packard
Phone: 01344 369369
Price: £199
URL: www.hp.com/uk

IF YOUR COMPUTER desk is currently cracking under the pressure of a peripheral mountain, then perhaps it's time you thought about a more lightweight, all-in-one solution to your image reproduction needs.

Arriving hot the heels of HP's well-received PSC 500, the 750 is slightly smaller than its predecessor but despite this, still manages to deliver improved performance – and boy how it performs.

We put the printer through its paces by printing out a copy of a *Practical Internet* cover, which contained a good selection of colours and photographs. Remarkably, with monochrome printing there was no evidence of banding whatsoever and the print quality was almost indistinguishable from a laser printed page. In colour, we were visibly moved by the supreme calibre of the page that came out. All of the colours retained their depth, the photograph looked like a photograph and there was a stunning sense of clarity.

Copy cat

The scanner element performs with the same aplomb, and being of a generous nature, HP has thrown in some optical character recognition software too, making it pretty useful if you've lost an important document. The software itself allows for interpolation and export of images in a suitable size.

When it came to photocopying, the PSC 750 again came up smelling of roses (or at least sweetly scented printer ink) and includes a number of customisable features for taking copies.

You can either drive them through the printer itself, or through the software on your PC, allowing you to go from a printout of reasonable quality all the way through to one that will delight your eyes.

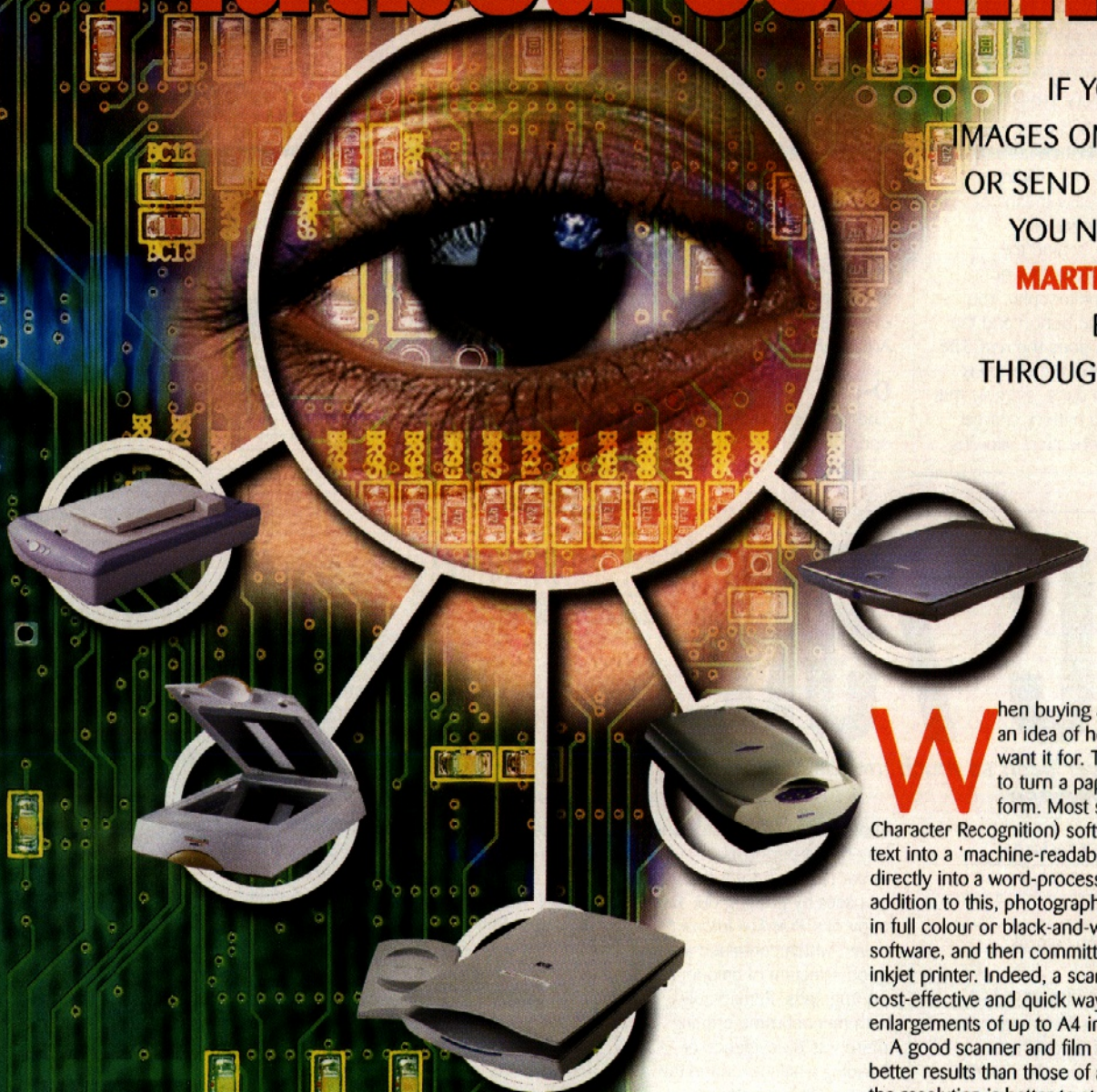
THE VERDICT

Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Value	★★★★★
Overall	★★★★★

HOW TO BUY...

Flatbed scanners

IF YOU WANT TO PUT IMAGES ON YOUR WEB SITE OR SEND THEM VIA EMAIL, YOU NEED A SCANNER. **MARTIN PIPE** PUTS FIVE BUDGET MODELS THROUGH THEIR PACES...



When buying a scanner it's good to have an idea of how they work and what you want it for. The basic job of a scanner is to turn a paper document into digital form. Most scanners have OCR (Optical Character Recognition) software that converts printed text into a 'machine-readable' form that can be fed directly into a word-processor or email program. In addition to this, photographic material can be scanned in full colour or black-and-white, manipulated by software, and then committed to glossy paper with an inkjet printer. Indeed, a scanner, PC and printer are a cost-effective and quick way of producing enlargements of up to A4 in size.

A good scanner and film camera, usually delivers better results than those of a digital camera, because the resolution is better to start with. If you have a home page, it could be livened up with scanned images. The software supplied with the typical scanner is capable of producing Web-friendly JPEG and GIF files.

The five scanners that we tested are of the 'flatbed' variety, in which the document is placed on a clear surface known as the 'platen'. A high-resolution CCD image sensor mounted on a motorised belt progressively 'reads' the document, digitises it and feeds it to the computer.

CANON N656U

THIS IS THE smallest scanner of the group, and is an ideal choice where desk space is at a premium. Not that you're restricted to a desk – the N656U is unusual insofar that all of its power requirements are derived from the host computer via the USB interface, instead of relying on a separate mains unit. As a result, you could use it with a notebook PC 'in the field'. Don't leave it connected for longer than necessary, though, as the N656U has a peak drain of 500mA, which will eat away at those notebook batteries! Canon has traditionally been supporters of both Mac and PC, and to this end the N656U is supplied with 'ScanGear' TWAIN drivers and software for both. The common software bundle includes an image manipulator (ArcSoft PhotoStudio), image database (Arcsoft PhotoBase) and OCR (Caere OmniPage SE).

Easy operation

On the front of the scanner is a single button that calls up the imaging program of your choice. The ScanGear CS-U driver, which can be accessed from any TWAIN-compatible program, is straightforward in its operation. Adjustments include resolution, scaling, colour depth and greyscale (gamma) adjustments. You also get a 'descreening' option for clean scans from half-tone pictures.

In use, the N656 is rather noisy, with a grating metallic whine. Scanning speed is rather average, our 5x7 colour print taking just under 30 seconds to transfer at a resolution of 300dpi. In terms of image quality, colour fidelity and dynamic range were both good – it also proved more than capable of capturing those finer details.

MICROTEK SCANMAKER 4600

AS WITH MANY other modern scanners, the elegantly-curved 4600 is a 1200dpi, 42-bit design. Like the others, it is hooked up to your personal computer via USB. This interface is common to both Macs and PCs of recent vintage; we're pleased to report that drivers for both are supplied in the box. You get Ulead's PhotoImpact for Windows, and Adobe PhotoDeluxe for both Mac and PC. OCR is catered for, meanwhile, by Mac/PC versions of Caere OmniPage. It may be fairly inexpensive, but Microtek has given its product room for expansion in the form of an optional transparency adaptor. Three 'quick-function' buttons can be accessed from the front of the scanner. Once the software has been installed, these buttons will invoke a 'normal' scan, 'scan-to-print' (your computer system becomes a photocopier) or 'scan-to-email'. Through the configuration menu, you can specify the relevant programs so that they integrate with the Scanmaker. The main scanning software is 'ScanWizard', a TWAIN-compliant affair.

Twice the fun

Unusually, there are two modes – 'standard' and 'advanced'. The former does the basics. Experienced users may want more control, and that's where the 'advanced' mode comes in. Adjustments from here include colour balance/depth, resolution, contrast/brightness, effects filters (sharpening, for example), tone ('gamma') curves, and de-screening (for pattern-free scans of half-tone originals). Usefully, the advanced mode allows you to conduct a 'pre-scan' that concentrates on the selected area. Preview scans take around seven seconds to complete in advanced mode – for some reason, things are rather slower (20 seconds) in the standard setting. A high-res (300dpi) scan of a 5x7 photographic print was conducted within 40 seconds. Image quality is excellent considering the budget price. They're pretty sharp – with the appropriate resolution – and rich in colour.

ONLINE RESOURCES

www.scantips.com
Scanning tips

www.jasc.com
Home of Paint Shop Pro, an excellent shareware PC image manipulator

www.adobe.com
Home of Photoshop and PhotoDeluxe – world-famous image-editing programs

www.xat.com/jpegopt/index.html
Make the most of your compressed images with JPEG Optimizer, available here

www.mindworkshop.com/alchemy/gifcon.html
Turn scanned images into animated GIF files for your Web site

www.cerious.com/download.htm
Organise your images with ThumbsPlus. Mac and PC versions available

TOP TIP!

! Once you've scanned your images, get them ready for use on your web site. see the feature 'create faster, smaller web graphics' in issue 55 of practical internet. call 01202 200 200 for back issues.

AGFA E50

AGFA, LIKE EPSON, has decided to make provision for the scanning of transparencies. In the case of the e50, though, the light source is built into the lid. Now why didn't anybody else think of that? The scanner's design appeals aesthetically, too. At the front of the unit is a coloured oval panel that, when pressed, releases a hinged control panel with four 'one-touch' buttons for scanning programs directly to applications. Note that the control panel and lid handle trim can be interchanged with plastics of a different colour. Round the back of the e50 is the USB interface, together with a connector into which plugs the lid-mounted transparency light source.

Rub the genie

Agfa has made its 42-bit 1200x2400dpi scanner dual-platform. Both Mac and PC 'flavours' of the TWAIN driver and software are supplied. The e50's software bundle is lean and mean; both Mac and PC variants consist of an image editor (Corel Print Office 2000), an OCR program (Readiris) and the aforementioned Scanwise. Most of the latter's power is hidden from the user to keep things simple. One of Scanwise's features is 'PhotoGenie' – an auto-picture control. Sometimes, though, it can misjudge matters and some scanned images were too dark or too light. Luckily, it can be turned off. User-definable settings are restricted to colour depth, resolution, scale, contrast, brightness and saturation. Agfa recommends that images are placed in the middle of the platen, which can make lining them up awkward. Speed is not the e50's strong point, a 300dpi scan of our 5x7 test print taking close to a minute to complete. The pictures are well worth the wait, though, with excellent detail and colour fidelity.

EPSON 1240U PHOTO

THIS IS A compact little scanner but with a useful extra (the 4x5in. transparency adaptor) thrown in, hence the 'Photo' of the name. This device, which replaces the removable lid, plugs into a connector mounted on the rear of the machine. Transparencies are sandwiched between the two; during the scan, a light source built into the adaptor illuminates the film. As with the other scanners tested, the 1240U Photo's optical resolution measures up at 1200x2400dpi, while the maximum colour depth is 42-bit (12-bit for greyscale). On the front panel are three 'hot' buttons, which will start the scanning and send the image to the relevant application. Interfacing is via the ubiquitous USB, and drivers/software for both Mac and PC are included. Quite clearly, the 1240U Photo is aimed at 'serious' enthusiasts; the image-manipulation software supplied with it is nothing less than Adobe's Photoshop 5.0 (even though it is the 'trimmed-down' LE version).

Manual relief

The TWAIN drivers are a definite improvement over previous models. There's a basic 'fully-auto' mode that attempts to match scan quality to the image, but it often gets things wrong! Chances are that the typical 1240U customer will instead opt for the 'manual' mode, which gives complete control over gamma curves, RGB levels, saturation and exposure. Other adjustments include the usual colour depth and resolution. 'Output' presets will optimise the scan for OCR work, photos, the Web and any 'specials' you may care to define yourself. Our 5x7 colour print took 16 seconds to scan at 300dpi. We found that scanned photos had a very slight edge over the HP's, with accurate colours (flesh tones, for example, were realistic), plenty of detail and an excellent dynamic range.

Practical internet

HP 5370C

BEST BUY ★★★★★

OF ALL OUR scanners, the 5370c is the best-connected. In addition to the usual USB interface, you get a parallel-port for older PCs. In fact, the 5370c was the only scanner to sport one of these. If you have no choice but to use the parallel port, you'll be pleased to learn that there's a 'pass-through' port so that your printer can remain connected. Also on the rear panel are two connectors for accessories. As with the Microtek model, the front panel is adorned with buttons that call up various tasks – in this case, email, fax, OCR and copy. Unfortunately, they protrude and can be activated accidentally.

Broader horizons

Thankfully, HP has finally realised that not everybody has a PC. As a result, your scanner comes packed with Mac drivers and software. The PC software bundle features PrecisionScan Pro (the TWAIN driver), Corel Print Office 2000, a Web page editor from Boomerang, Caere's PageKeeper and a program that turns your computer system into a photocopier. Although it doesn't have the friendliest user interface around, the TWAIN driver is rather intelligent in some respects and will automatically make corrections to your scanning settings if the ones you've selected are deemed unsuitable. Thankfully, these decisions can be ignored! Precision Scan Pro is unusual insofar that OCR functionality is embedded. Converting documents into text is accurate and quick. Indeed, the 1200x2400dpi (optical) 42-bit colour 5370c is generally fast – although a full A4 preview takes 12 seconds, a 300dpi scan of a 5x7 print is completed within 20 seconds. Image quality is excellent, with impressive colour fidelity and good dynamic (contrast) range.

JARGON BUSTER

Colour depth
The number of bits allocated to each pixel. GIF-compressed images are restricted to an 8-bit colour depth (256 colours). BMP and JPEG files can employ a 24-bit colour depth (8 bits for each primary colour)

OCR
Optical Character Recognition – the process of accurately converting printed text into its electronic equivalent

Plate
The clear scanning surface

Resolution
The number of pixels (picture elements) that make up the picture. Typically expressed as the number of pixels horizontally by the number of pixels vertically, or the number of dots – or pixels – per inch (dpi)

TWAIN
Standardised software protocol that enables image acquisition devices (scanners and cameras) to be accessed from within a program

USB
Universal Serial Bus. A very fast serial interface, employed by all of the scanners under test

SCANNERS HEAD TO HEAD

CONTACT	PRICE	URL	PHONE
Microtek	£116	www.microtek.nl	01908 317797
HP	£179	www.hp.com/uk	0845 474747
Epson	£229	www.epson.co.uk	0800 220546
Agfa	£199	www.agfa.co.uk	0208 231 4903
Canon	£116	www.canon.co.uk	0121 680 8062

Microtek has given the Scanmaker 4600 room to grow

With embedded OCR, the HP 5370C is a great buy

Before spending £229, read about the 1240OU Photo from Epson's Web site

If the e50 caught your eye, find out more from AGFA's site

For details on where to buy the N656U, visit Canon's Web site

on the CD

THESE PAGES ARE WHERE YOU'LL FIND ALL THE DETAILS OF WHAT'S INCLUDED ON THE COVER CD, AS WELL AS TUTORIALS ON HOW TO USE SOME OF THE PROGRAMS

Using the CD-ROM

The minimum recommended specification to run the *Practical Internet* CD is 800 X 600 screen resolution, 16Mb RAM, 16 bit colour, Windows 95/98/ME, Intel Pentium or compatible P90. We recommend that all users shut down all other applications while running the CD.

The CD will autorun in Windows 95/98. For users without autorun enabled go to the start menu, select RUN and type d:\PracticalInternet.exe (replacing 'd' with the letter of your CD drive) and press 'Return'. ***Please note:*** *This month's CD is PC only.*

Damaged discs
We will be please to replace any CD that is cracked, scratched or snapped upon purchase. Return them to the following address: Cover Disc Returns, Paragon Publishing, Paragon House, St Peter's Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2JS. If you experience technical problems, not due to physical damage on the CD, please DO NOT return any discs to us unless requested by the support team.

Missing discs
If you have purchased the magazine and have not received your CD, we will be happy to send you out a replacement disc. Email **subs@paragon.co.uk** quoting the magazine and issue number, full postal address and daytime phone number.

Problems using the disc
If you encounter problems using the CD or installing the software you can email **cdhelp@paragon.co.uk**. Questions will be answered twice daily.

Please provide us with as much information about the technical specifications of your machine and the software errors you are receiving as well as quoting the magazine and issue number in your email.

Our helpdesk team will be taking calls about disc installation problems on Wednesday afternoons between 2 and 6pm. Phone **01202 200259**.

NOTE: ***This service can only deal with problems when installing software from our CDs. Issues surrounding the use and purchase of software and all ISP queries must be referred to the relevant software publisher, merchant or ISP.***

The CD logo
Look out for this logo in the magazine. It tells you which of the programs mentioned in features, or explored in tutorials, are on the Practical Internet cover CD-ROM.

SEND SMS MESSAGES WITH TEXTNOW!

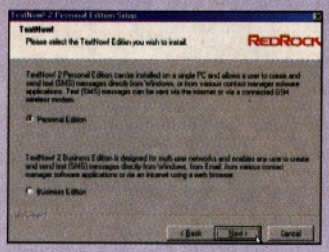
Communicate instantly with any mobile device from the comfort of your PC, with this fully working software solution worth £95

FULLY WORKING PROGRAM! NO DOLD FOR £95

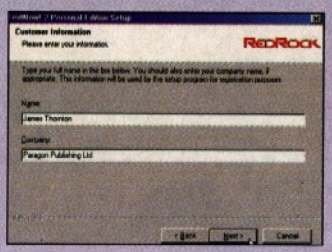
THERE'S NO NEED to worry if you're running low on mobile phone credits or don't own one, you can still send text messages using TextNow!

TextNow! provides a text messaging server and is able to handle any number of text messages to either single or multiple destinations. The software supports virtually any mobile network. It is capable of delivering up to 80 messages a minute and the program provides global and personal phonebooks to store frequently used numbers. Please note, you will need an Internet connection to register the product with RedRock. When you do this, follow the company's instructions on how to have full use of this program. If you're using Win 95, you may be required to install the program, restart when prompted and then install the second part to have full use of the software. During installation, you will have to choose a password. Make sure you remember this, as you need it to log in.

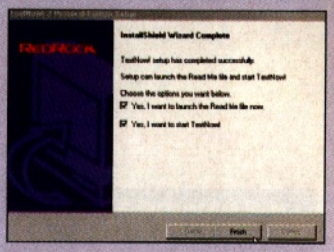
HOW TO SEND A TEXT MESSAGE WITH TEXTNOW!



1 Start the installation
Load the cover CD. You'll need to select the TextNow! Personal Edition rather than the Business Edition from the menu option to set up the text messaging program on a single PC.

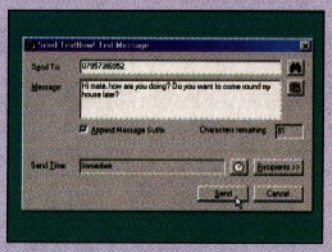


2 Enter your details
Complete the registration forms to configure your account. You'll need to enter your username, password and connection type. Now click the option to restart your machine.

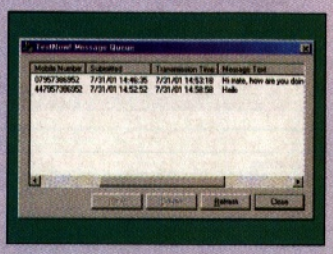


3 Finish the installation
Enter your username and password and click the link to the 'RedRock SMS Service Centre' when prompted. Complete the online form then click 'Finish' to run TextNow!

4 Send a message
When TextNow! has loaded an icon will appear in the Windows System Tray. Right-click on this to display the list of menu options. To compose a new text message select 'New Message'.



5 Compose your text
Next, enter the mobile phone number of the person you are texting in the box at the top of the screen. Type out your message in the main box and click 'Send' and wave it goodbye.



6 Check the queue
To check your sent messages, right-click the TextNow! icon and pick 'View Queue'. You can now check details such as the status, mobile number, as well as the message content.

SATORI PHOTO XL 2.29

CREATE AND EDIT SNAPPY GRAPHICS WITH THIS FULLY WORKING PACKAGE THEN CHECK OUT OUR GREAT UPGRADE OFFER FOR ALL READERS...

FULLY WORKING PROGRAM! NO DEMO FOR £495

CREATING IMPRESSIVE-LOOKING graphics and logos for your site is a doddle with this great software, as our tutorial on pages 62-63 demonstrates. The program combines the power and flexibility of vector graphics with the speed and responsiveness of bitmap image editing software.

The latest version includes advanced controls for Web graphics, featuring editable image/slicing maps, real-time optimisation previews, HTML export, GIF animation and JavaScript rollover wizards. In order to use this version of PhotoXL you will be asked for an activation key, which is **A3009-X332862**. And if you enjoy mastering version 2.29 of PhotoXL, why not take advantage of our fantastic upgrade offer to get even further along the road towards pro-level Web graphics with Satori FilmFX 3.0?

We've teamed up with developers Spaceward Graphics to offer you Satori FilmFX 3.0 for £49, plus VAT and a £5 shipping. That's an incredible £346 off the suggested retail price. Not only this but along with a boxed copy of FilmFX you will also get a free version of Satori PaintFX! To take advantage of this special deal simply call Spaceward on **01638 731795** or email at **sales@satoripaint.com**.

2,500 Photos

ADORN YOUR SITE WITH SOME QUALITY SNAPS

FULLY WORKING SOFTWARE!

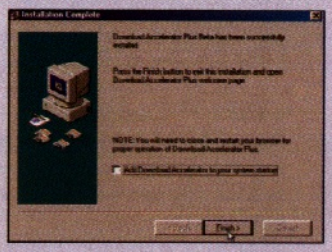
2,500 PHOTOS CONTAINS high-quality copyright-free images come from all over the world, divided into 25 different categories. The sections include clouds, holidays, effects, food, ocean, people and sports.

Once you have installed 2,500 Photos from Greensteet, you need to do the following to view the images. Go to the Start menu, choose 'Programs' and locate Greensteet. Click on the Picture Browser from the pop-up menu. When launched in the folder column (the left-hand window pane of the browser), click on the '+ Practical 58' icon. Now double-click on the Content folder in the main window pane and double-click on the English folder. Now you just have to click any of the folders to view the images.

GETTING STARTED WITH DOWNLOAD ACCELERATOR 5

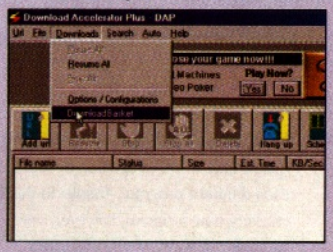
WITH MORE TO download on the Internet than you could possibly manage, the chances are that you'll come up against one of the many problems that plague users trying to download files. The ultimate nightmare is when you wait for ages for a file to download, only for it to fall down and die near the moment of completion. But put that brick down, for there is a more satisfactory solution than smashing your monitor to pieces.

Installing Download Accelerator Plus 5 should alleviate most of the nightmarish problems you've been encountering with downloading from the Net. As well as allowing you to resume broken downloads, the program contains a variety of extras to make sure that you're always fully in control of your downloads.



1 Installing the program

While installing, you'll be asked if you want to make Download Accelerator the default download manager (choose yes). You'll also be asked if you want it to start automatically. We'd suggest no, for a quicker start-up.



2 Download Basket

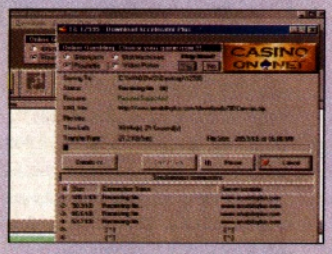
When you start the program, you'll see this. Before anything else, we need to find something to download. Go to 'Download' then 'Download basket' to bring up a window which acts as a handy drop target for links.

3 Find a link

Now, open your browser. Notice there's a Download Accelerator toolbar in the main window to help you use it. For the moment, though, find a link to a file on the Web, then drag it into the 'Download basket'.

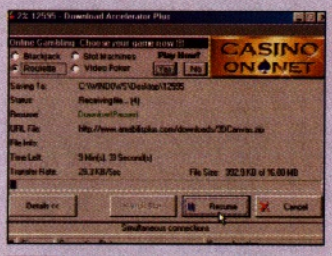
4 Download now

This brings up the first download box, where you are told the speed of the site you want to download from. You can decide whether to download right now, or postpone the download till later. We chose now.



5 The download

This box lets you see how your download is progressing, and how quickly each chunk is getting along. You're told how much time is remaining on the download, as well as the average transfer rate.



6 Pause and resume

The main advantage of a program like this is that you can start and stop downloads. To view this in action, simply press on the 'Pause' button in the interface, and then 'Resume' when you want it to start again.

Spice up your browsing

USE THE TOP OF THE RANGE BROWSING SOFTWARE ON THIS MONTH'S DISC TO GET THE BEST OUT OF YOUR WEB EXPERIENCE

Odigo 3.1

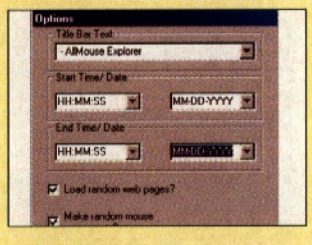
Freeware, 59Kb

NEW! Despite its undoubted greatness, one of the major problems with instant messaging is that there's little or no integration between each different program. Thanks to this cracking new program, however, you can now talk to everyone whatever system they may be using. Odigo is a cross-platform instant messenger that is compatible with AOL, Yahoo! and ICQ. The program offers many advanced real-time communication features such as dynamic buddy lists, voice messaging, offline messaging and email alerts.

All Mouse 2

Freeware, 370Kb

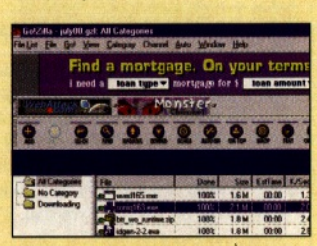
NEW! Terminate infuriating Internet cut-offs with this ingenious piece of software. All Mouse can move your mouse to stop your screensaver from running or load random Web pages at random intervals to fool servers into thinking that you're browsing. You can supply your own list of up to 50 URLs.



Go!Zilla

Freeware, 2.2Mb

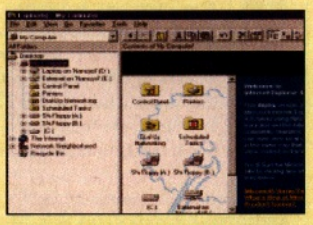
Go!Zilla lets you gather together URL links for files that you want to download simply by dragging them from your browser. You can add as many download locations for a file as you like and when Go!Zilla retrieves the file for you, it will check all available locations and deliver the fastest possible connection. Another great feature of the program is that it lets you schedule a file for downloading later, when the network traffic is quieter.



Internet Explorer 5.5

Freeware, 498 Kb

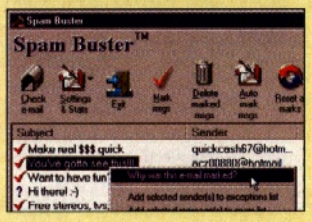
One of the industry's most popular browsers, IE5.5 includes support for Dynamic HTML, Java and the Channel Definition Format (CDF), and just generally makes life a whole lot easier for you. An AutoSearch feature lets you choose your search engine and display results in different ways.



Spam Buster 1.9

Freeware, 1.3Mb

Wipe out evil email spam with this program that contains a list of 15,000 spam addresses. Spam Buster checks email for up to 12 different mailboxes, and it can check automatically or delete spam without user intervention.



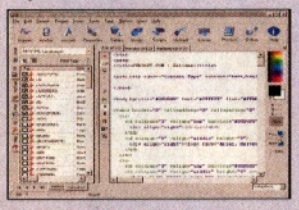
BUILD A SITE FROM SCRATCH

You've learned how the professionals do it, now see what you're made of with this bundle of top Web building software...

1st Page 2000

Freeware, 5Mb

Blooming Webmasters will go bonkers over this excellent HTML/Web authoring program. It's a powerful tool with an intuitive interface and an impressive cocktail of the best features from several top of the range HTML editors. These include automatic image sizing, HTML stripper, document compressor, source formatter together with a whole bunch of useful JavaScript features. While its fair to say that most WYSIWYG editors allow you to put a site together more easily, we feel 1st Page gives you much greater control over the coding of your site, allowing you to make it as complex or as simple as you like.



FlashWizard 2.0

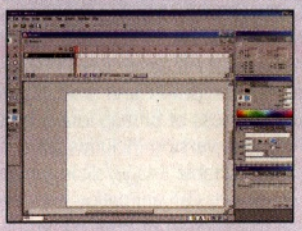
Freeware, 861Kb

NEW! This handy program lets you magically bring Web pages to life without having to be a Flash guru. FlashWizard is a simple tool that can help you enhance your site with Flash elements by using online templates. You can add background sounds, graphics and links, without any specific knowledge of Flash. Once you've created your site you are sent a demo by email, and if you are pleased with it you can purchase the relevant files needed to upload to your server.

Flash 5

30-day trial, 19Mb

The mother of all Web animation programs will have you playing about with creative animations until the cows call it a night. Flash 5 comes with a myriad of features designed to make it easy for you to add lively animated menus, buttons and icons to your site. Because the animation files you create are pretty small, your site's visitors shouldn't have any hold-ups when viewing the animations either.



CoffeeCup Firestarter

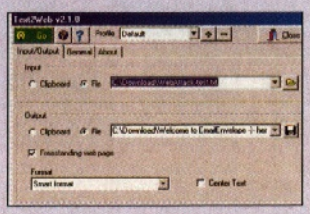
Shareware, 2.6Mb

NEW! Rustle up some nifty Flash Effects for your Web site with this easy to use program. It quickly creates complex text and image effects at the mere click of a mouse button, allowing you to fashion your own Flash intro pages, navigation systems, graphic logos, and all that jazz. Firestarter has over 50 built-in, ready-to-use effects including Assemble, Explode and Fade as well as a collection of cool MP3 sounds (The Prodigy not included, unfortunately). This Shareware version is a 30-day trial and full registration costs $49. However Firestarter is free if you host your site with CoffeeCup (**www.bluedomino.com**).

Text2Web

Freeware, 663Kb

This handy tool lets you convert text documents into HTML format. It incorporates integrated clipboard support, giving you an almost seamless method of inserting snippets of text (formatted or unformatted) into your Web pages. You can operate in command-line, batch or interactive mode and the HTML formatting handles line and column sensitive text.



A-Z index of software on this month's free CD...

Full products
2,500 Free Photos
Full product.
Satori Photo XL
Full product. Requires serial number (see page 131
TextNow!
Full product

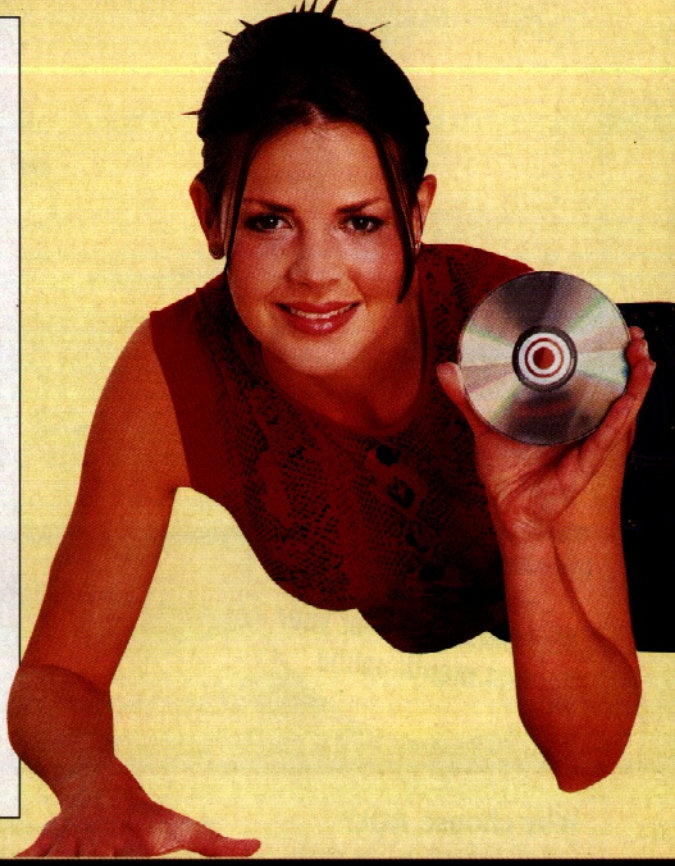
Net workshop
Flash 5
30-day trial
Flash demo
Demo of Flash tutorial (see page 74-75)
MP3 CD Organiser
Freeware. Not supported for Win 95
Opera 5.12
30-day trial
Satori Photo XL
Full product.

Your Business Online
Comparison Shopper
Freeware
Credit Crad Verifier
Freeware
Invoice Store 4.0
Shareware
Promotion Pro 4.6
Freeware
ShopFactory 4.4
30-day trial

Browsing
Adobe Acrobat Reader
Freeware
AllMouse2
Freeware
ChargeMeter
Freeware
Compass 2.80
30-day trial
Download Accelerator 5
Freeware
ePrompter 1.04
Freeware. Not supported for Win95
Favorites to HTML
Freeware
Go!Zilla 3.9
Freeware
IE5 Web Accessories
Freeware
Internet Explorer 5.5
Freeware
Netscape 6
Freeware. Practical Internet and Netscape UK cannot offer tech support. We advise that only advanced users install it
Odigo 3.1
Freeware
Opera 5.11
30-day trial
Outlook Express 5
Freeware, part of IE5
RealPlayer 8
Freeware
Shockwave Player
Freeware
Spam Buster 1.9
Freeware
Web Stripper
Freeware
WinZip 8
Freeware

Site building
1st Page 2000
Freeware
AudioGrabber
Freeware. Loads behind interface
CoffeeCup Firestarter
Shareware. Not supported for Win95
Flash 5
30-day trial
FlashWizard 2.0
Freeware
Font Creator
30-day trial
Gate Keeper 3.2
Freeware
HTML Optimizer
Freeware
Jpeg Cleaner 2.2
Freeware
MiniMapper Plus
Freeware
PhotoSuite 4
30-day trial
Text2Web
Freeware
Traffic Seeker Pro 3.72
Shareware
X Cleaner
Freeware

ISP
Abel Gratis
Free Internet access



QiQ

Website
Design
Promotion
Translation
Hosting
Domain Names
E-Commerce
Concepts

Telephone
01536 507 706
E-mail
info@qiq.co.uk
Web
www.qiq.co.uk
Fax
07970 570 825

Clients include
R.N.I.B, Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association, Net4nowt.com
Visit the QiQ portfolio at www.qiq.co.uk

If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got.

QiQ - Helping businesses do things e-differently.

The Intelligent E-Business Consultancy

Your completely free* 99 hour AOL trial means exactly that – NO Internet phone bill during your trial and NO Membership fee for your first month online

AOL

Service provider:	AOL
Free time:	99 Hours
Modem speeds:	Up to 56K
Technical support:	0800 376 5432
URL:	www.aol.co.uk
Monthly rate:	£14.99
Platforms:	Windows 9x (95, 98, 98SE), Windows ME, 2000

AOL is the World's No. 1 Internet online service – why not try it out today?

Why choose AOL?

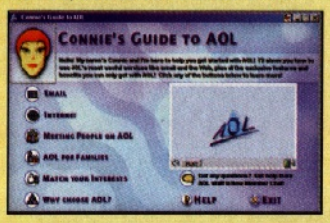
Over 30 million people worldwide have already chosen AOL, making it the World's No 1 Internet Online Service – discover why with your FREE* 99 hour Internet trial.

AOL is a fun, affordable, easy to use information service covering everything from the latest News & Sports to Travel and Entertainment, so use your FREE trial today and see what you've been missing.

Getting started

As soon as you start you FREE trial, AOL makes your experience online as enjoyable as possible. You can become an expert in minutes by taking a tour with Connie, AOL's exclusive guide to getting the most out of your Internet experience. Connie's new member guide contains everything you need to know from how to set up your email and using the Internet to how to make the most of the exclusive benefits you can only get with AOL.

As well as Connie, only AOL has 250 hosts and guides – a team of trained, dedicated volunteers who



offer you help and guidance and enforce rules of decency in chat rooms and on message boards.

Keywords and Favourite Places

Once you have found a favourite place in AOL or on the Web, finding it again is easy. You can save it by clicking on the heart logo in the top right-hand corner of your screen. To access it again, click the large heart logo on the AOL toolbar where your favourite places are stored.

Exclusive content

Take a look at our 18 expanded AOL channels and you will find an

extensive range of unique content including Sports, Shopping and Health. You can find these channels by clicking on the channel bar at the top-left of your screen when you sign on to AOL. It's really that simple. All of these channels combine the best of the World Wide Web with writers, resources and tools commissioned specially by AOL, and all underpinned by the world-famous chat rooms and

message boards where you can swap advice and gossip with other people just like you.

Send an email or have a chat

Keep in contact with your family, friends and work colleagues with email and Instant Messages. You can set up to seven email addresses on your account. AOL even spell checks your mail before sending it. And, with its Instant Messages, you can have a one-to-one conversation with your friends in real-time.

Parental Controls

You no longer need to worry about what your kids are accessing on the Internet, thanks to AOL's exclusive Parental Controls. Not only does it provide a whole Channel devoted to Kids including Games, News and Chat, the Parental Controls let you set the limits on what your kids can and cannot access. You can decide whether you want your kids to see our special areas for Kids Only, Young Teens or Mature Teens or let them access the entire Web. The choice is entirely yours.

So what are you waiting for? Sign up now using your cover CD for your FREE* Internet trial

SOME OF AOL'S UNIQUE BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Flat Rate Internet Access
- Completely FREE* 99 hour Internet trial
- Exciting NEW features with AOL Version 6.0
- Seven email addresses
- Instant Messaging
- 18 exclusive channels
- Parental Controls
- 30 million members Worldwide

Plus FREE Member and Technical help

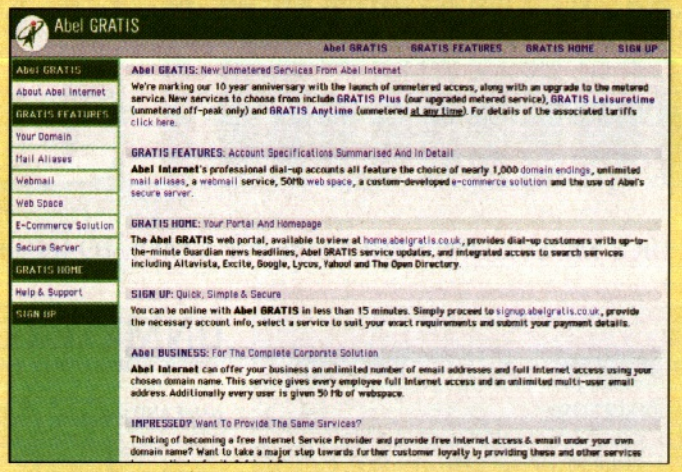
Whether you have technical problems or have a query with your account you can call AOL on its FREEPHONE Member helpline seven days a week – **0800 376 5432**

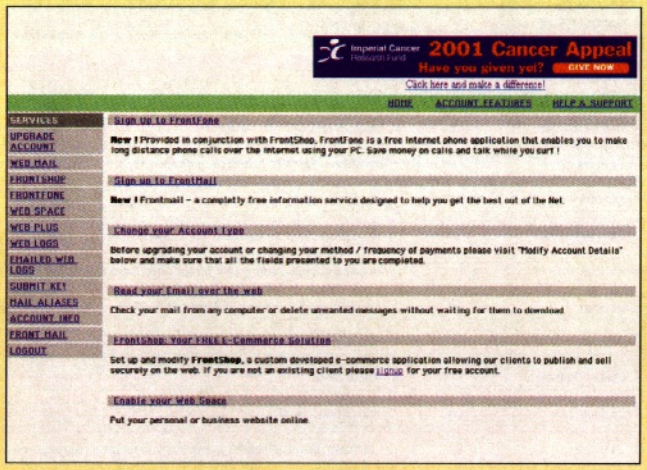
**Your 99 free hour Free trial offer requires credit card details and must be used within your first month online. Membership fee applies after your first month online.*

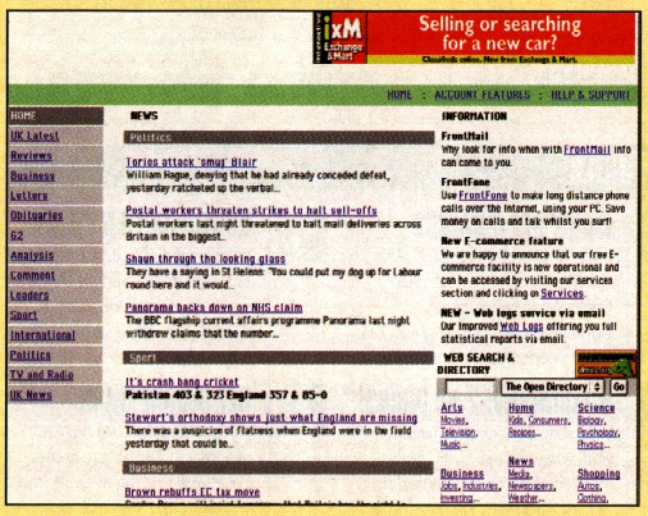
Abel Internet

Ready, willing and Abel to set YOU up as a FREE Internet service provider!

Service provider:	Abel Internet
Free time:	Life
Modem speeds:	Up to 56k (x2, K56Flex, V.90), ISDN 64 & ISDN 128, ADSL
Subscription:	Subscription free, business and 0800
Dial enquiries:	sales@abelgratis.co.uk
Dial URL:	www.abelgratis.co.uk
VISP enquiries:	info@abelvisp.co.uk
VISP URL:	www.abelvisp.co.uk
Monthly rate:	Free
Annual rate:	Free
Platforms:	Win 3.x, 95, 98, ME, NT4,2000 Mac







BUSINESSES AND PRIVATE users will be interested to learn about another first from Abel Internet. Abel believes that any company with a client-base should become a Virtual ISP (VISP). Abel can set up your company as an Internet service provider and offer you a re-branded portal facility at minimal expense as well as generating extra income from Abel's "call-share scheme'. E-Commerce facilities come as standard for the VISP and their clients. This is a big step towards customer loyalty and a very efficient way of staying in touch with one's client base.

This service is suitable for everybody, no matter how big or how small the client-base may be. For more details visit **www.abelvisp.co.uk**

Choice of packages

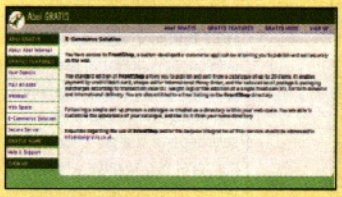
Abel Internet has launched a choice of 0800 packages to suit every budget. Abel clients benefit from a choice of packages offering a choice of Peak or Off-Peak and with various payment methods. For more details of Abel's 0800 packages, FREE E-Commerce facility and ADSL visit **www.abelgratis.co.uk**

Abel Internet, already well established and respected for its reliable subscription services, also provides a subscription-free service offering full Internet access and email facilities on a local call rate number. to sign up for a subscription-free account visit **www.abelgratis.co.uk**

Abel Gratis, Abel's FREE service, offers you full unlimited free access to the Internet with no hidden charges at speeds of up to 56k, V.90 & ISDN, POP and SMTP both ways for email, as well as an unlimited number of multi-user email addresses and aliases. Choosing Abel Gratis will also entitle you to 50Mb free Web space available for personal or business use. Your free Web space includes free Statistical Reports and use of Abel's Secure Server. The really interesting news is that Abel Gratis is the first ISP in the UK to offer all its clients, both business and private, a vast choice of domain addresses to choose from with the free service. This avoids the expense and maintenance of a full domain name. Home and business users have the fun aspect too. For example:

joe@bloggs.net-shopping.org.uk
joe@bloggs.the-office.org.uk
joe@bloggs.far2sexy.co.uk
joe@bloggs.amorous.co.uk
joe@bloggs.oo7.org.uk
joe@bloggs.1to1.org
and hundreds more.

Abel supplies software for Windows, Mac and Amiga. Simply install Abel's software from the cover CD or visit **www.abelgratis.co.uk** to set yourself up online. Abel's clients can additionally access their email via the Web. All Abel clients, regardless of the service they choose, benefit from the free use of Abel's Secure Server.



WHICH ISP?

THE UK'S MOST COMPREHENSIVE A-Z GUIDE TO INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

ISP listings

DIRECTORY 136
If you can't decide which service provider to sign up with, read our guide.

QUICK TESTS 137
Each issue we test the performance of a group of different ISPs. This month we take a look at Fire-Bug, iNet Wales, Doctors.net, Surf3, Buy and Sell.net, Easynet and 4u2give.

ISP NEWS BYTES 138, 143
Catch up on the latest ISP news.

HEAD-TO-HEAD 141
Abel and KeMe are compared.

UNMETERED INTERNET PROVIDERS

WHY SPEND MONEY ON YOUR INTERNET PHONE CALLS WHEN THESE SERVICES OFFER FREEPHONE NET ACCESS?

NAME AND URL	COST	0800 ACCESS	WEB SPACE Mb	COMMENTS
08002go http://www.08002go.com	£9.98	24 Hours	20	Any phone company. Gold & Platinum packages TBA. No cut-off period.
24-7Freecall http://www.24-7freecall.net	£14.99	24 Hours	10	To replace existing unmetered service when FRIACO becomes available.
4theNET Business Anytime http://www.4thenet.co.uk	£23.49	24 Hours	10	No cut-off period between 6am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.
Abel DIAL Anytime http://www.abel.co.uk	£27.99	24 Hours	50	100-hour monthly limit. Has a 3 hour cut-off.
Affinity http://www.affinity.uk.com/surftime.htm	£9.99	General Off-Peak	10	1p per minute at other times.
AOL http://www.aol.co.uk	£14.99	24 Hours	14	No cut-off period. Non-BT customers accepted.
blueyonder SurfUnlimited http://www.blueyonder.co.uk	£10.00	24 Hours	30	Customers will need a Telewest line.
BT Connect http://www.btclickforbusiness.com	£31.74	24 Hours	20	Business Internet service for the small or home office.
BT Connect Lite http://www.btclickforbusiness.com	£10.69	General Off-Peak	20	Business Internet service for the small office or home office worker.
BT Internet AnyTime http://www.btinternet.com	£14.99	24 Hours	50	12 hours of unmetered off-peak access per month.
ClaraNET FreeTime 12 http://www.clara.net	£4.99	General Off-Peak	50	
Commundo http://www.commundo.co.uk	£0.00	24 Hours	100	No cut-off period.
Demon Premier Connect Plus http://www.demon.net	£39.98	24 Hours	20	
Eclipse Internet http://www.eclipse.net.uk	£5.99	General Off-Peak	10	Business packages also available.
EcosseTel Vroom2 http://www.ecossetel.net	£0.00	24 Hours	-	Annual fee of £79.99. Residential customers only.
Freechariot FC Unlimited http://www.freechariot.co.uk	£13.99	24 Hours	10	Has a 2-hour cut-off period, but can be extended to 4 as an extra £2.50.
Freedom2Surf http://www.freedom2surf.net	£9.40	General Off-Peak	25	Need to download an application form. Payable by debit or credit card.
GlenWorld http://www.glen-world.co.uk	£14.95	24 Hours	0	Ex-Connect25 subscribers get first 3 months free. Subject to a 12 month contract.
Intensive Networks http://web.intensive.net	£19.99	24 Hours	20	18 months unmetered for £58.75 plus BT SurfTime payment of £19.99 p/m.
intY http://www.inty.net	£32.91	24 Hours	5	Sold as part of a business package.
jings http://www.jings.com	£11.99	General Off-Peak	999	4 hour cut-off.
KeMe http://www.keme.com	£14.95	24 Hours	50	Has a 2 hour cut-off.
Kingston AnyTime http://www.kcltd.co.uk	£29.99	24 Hours	20	700 hours p/m of unmetered access. Kingston telephone customers only.
LibertySurf http://www.libertysurf.co.uk	£0.00	24 Hours	50	Annual fee of £10. 4 hours per month, then 1p per minute.
LineOne AnyTime http://www.lineone.net	£14.99	24 Hours	50	Mac users supported. Payment by credit/debit cards.
LineOne SurfTime http://www.lineone.net	£9.99	General Off-Peak	50	Calls to the Internet at other times charged at 1p per minute

SEVEN STEPS TO PICK YOUR IDEAL INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER

1 CHOOSE YOUR ISP TYPE

0800 FREEPHONE ISPS usually make a monthly subscription charge, but users are not billed for any Net phone charges.
FREE ISPS don't charge monthly subscription rates, but users do pay local phone rates when online.
PAY ISPS make a monthly subscription charge. Users also pay local phone rates when online. They are fast, reliable and offer top quality tech support.

2 GETTING SPEEDY HELP

If you're new to the Net, you will make lots of calls to the ISP's telephone helpline – so pick one with low-cost support. See our listings for the prices.

3 GOT KIDS?

Choose ISPs like AOL that filter content, or use 'kids-only' ISPs like KidzNet (**www.kidz.co.uk**). Alternatively, get PC censor software that works with all ISPs.

4 ENJOY NET GAMING?

If you're a keen online game player, a dedicated fast ISP is essential. GamesWorld (**www.games-world.net**) is one of several services that supports Quake, for example.

5 NO WINDOWS? NO PROBS!

Freeserve, BT Click and Demon work well with Linux, while Mac users should consider Madasafish, AOL or AbelGratis. Windows NT is suited well to MSN and BigWig.

6 GONNA BUILD A SITE?

If you intend to build a Web site, check your ISP offers free Web space. Some provide unlimited space (2Mb will be ample) while others offer free domain names.

7 GET GLOBAL EMAIL

If your ISP offers a Webmail service you'll be able to access your email from anywhere in the world through a Web browser. This is handy for travellers and tourists.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH www.net4nowt.com net4nowt

NAME AND URL	COST	0800 ACCESS	WEB SPACE Mb	COMMENTS
LogicSurf Internet http://www.logicsurf.net	£13.00	24 Hours	15	BT and NTL telephone customers accepted.
Madasafish http://www.madasafish.com	£11.99	General Off-Peak	999	Need to be an existing Madasafish user. Has a 4 Hour Cut-off period.
Madasafish http://www.madasafish.com	£27.99	24 Hours	999	Need to be an existing Madasafish user. 4 Hour cut-off period.
Net in a Nutshell http://www.nutshell.co.uk	£12.99	24 Hours	5	Also has a range of packages which include the purchase of a new PC system.
NildramSurftime http://www.getsurftime.co.uk	£17.74	General Off-Peak	25	Peak access charged at local rate. 2 hour cut-off period. other options available
ntlworld http://www.ntlworld.com	£0.00	24 Hours	10	Free for NTL cable customers as part of TV and Phone package.
PlusNet Connect 1 Always On http://www.plus.net	£119.99	24 Hours	250	Contention ratio 1:1 Residential use only. No cut-off.
Silvermead Business Unlimited http://www.silvermead.net	£12.91	08:00 - 18:00 Mon-Fri	10	Local rate at other times. 6 month contract.
Silvermead Internet Unlimited http://www.silvermead.net	£13.99	24 Hours	10	For home use only. 6 month contract.
SniffOut DreamTime http://www.sniffout.net	£19.99	24 Hours	999	Has a 5 hour cut-off period. Mac users supported.
StrayDuck http://www.strayduck.com	£0.00	24 Hours	25	One week of 0800 access in three depending on average 0845 use.
SupaNet Supahighway http://www.supahighway.com	£12.99	24 Hours	20	4 hour cut-off period. Uses BT-surfport product.
SurfAnytimeBusinessUnlimitedOne http://www.surfanytime.net	£11.75	08:00 - 18:00 Mon-Sat	10	Calls at other times are charged at local rate.
SurfAnytimeGold http://www.surfanytime.net	£15.49	24 Hours	10	Residential account with a 4hour cut-off period.
SurfAnytimeHomeTime http://www.surfanytime.net	£4.99	12:00 - 17:00	10	Local call rate at other times. Residential use. No cut off period.
SurfAnytimeSilver http://www.surfanytime.net	£12.99	24 Hours	10	Residential account with 2hour cut-off period.
SurfingRabbit http://www.surfingrabbit.com	£19.99	24 Hours	10	Monthly subscription fees are payable 1 month in advance by debit/credit card.
Tiny T:Surf Value http://www.tinyonline.net	£8.99	16:00 - 08:00 Mon-Fri + w/e	15	
TinyT:SurfPlus http://www.tinyonline.net/tsurf	£14.99	24 Hours	15	
TotalServeUltimateExpress http://www.totalserve.co.uk	£2.34	24 Hours	999	200 minutes p/m then 1p per minute. Calls limited to 10 minutes in any one hour to enable users to send/receive mail.
TotalServeUltimateSurf24/7 http://www.totalserve.co.uk	£12.97	24 Hours	999	2 hour cut-off period. Yearly option available giving 13 months for the price of 12.
TotalserveUltimateSurfLite http://www.totalserve.co.uk	£8.22	General Off-Peak	999	Calls at other times charged at local rate. 2 hour cut off period.
V21 http://www.v21.co.uk	£9.99	24 Hours	10	The family-safe ISP which will protect children from illegal and adult material.
Virgin.net http://www.virgin.net	£15.00	24 Hours	15	Currently on hold.
WorldOnlineTiscali100 http://www.worldonline.co.uk	£9.99	24 Hours	25	Restricted to 100 hours per month then 1p per minute. need to use 1690 prefix.
WorldOnlineTiscali50 http://www.worldonline.co.uk	£5.99	24 Hours	25	Restricted to 50 hours p/m then 1p per minute. Need to use the 1690 prefix.
Zetnet off-peak http://www.zetnet.co.uk	£15.99	General Off-Peak	25	Has a 3 hour cut off period. Local rate at other times.
Zoom http://www.zoom.co.uk	£0.00	24 Hours	20	Not accepting new users. one off fee for £10 - get back a £10 shopping voucher.

FREE ISP DIRECTORY

YOUR AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE TO SUBSCRIPTION-FREE ISPS WHICH CHARGE ONLY FOR LOCAL CALL RATES

NAME AND URL	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS	V.90	128K ISDN
1jena.com http://www.1jena.com	999	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
4TheNet http://www.4thenet.co.uk	999	999	Yes	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
4u2give http://www.4u2give.com	1	0	No	Standard BT	Yes	Yes
Abel Gratis http://www.abelgratis.co.uk	999	50	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
Ace Internet http://www.ace-internet.co.uk	10	5	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Adaption Software http://www.adaption-software.com/freenet.htm	999	100	No	Premium - 25p	Yes	No
Alkazar Internet http://www.alkazar.net	5	999	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Amlink http://www.amlink.co.uk	999	250	Yes	National Rate	Yes	No
AngliaNet http://www.free.anglianet.co.uk	0	0	No	Standard BT	Yes	No
AppleOnline http://www.appleonline.net	999	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Arcinter.net http://www.arcinter.net	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Arsenal Net http://www.arsenal.co.uk	5	5	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Barclays Bank http://www.barclays.co.uk	5	0	No	National Rate	Yes	No
Barlick Net http://www.barlick.net	999	999	No	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
Barrys World http://www.barrysworld.com	999	0	Yes	N/A	Yes	No
Beebware http://www.beebware.com	999	999	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Blue Cross Net http://www.bluecross-free.net	5	10	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
blueyonder http://www.blueyonder.co.uk/dial	15	30	Yes	Free	Yes	Yes

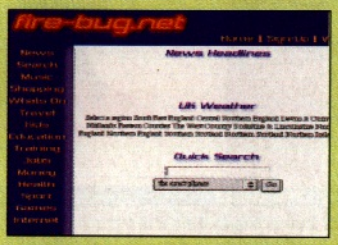
FREE ISP >>>>>>>>>>>

QUICK TEST

Fire-Bug

www.fire-bug.com

PROMISING AN APPETISING cocktail of quick download speeds and high connection rates, Fire-Bug provides free Net access for anyone in the UK. With a professional looking portal (which you'd probably expect from a Web design company) and stacks of features, this ISP looks the business on paper but can it cut the mustard against the millions of other free access providers?



Ease of use ★★★

The service is pretty easy to get hooked up to and just involves completing a straightforward online form to get you going. Once you've done this, it'll take about 30 seconds to set up your account and then once you've configured your system, you're ready to roll. Unfortunately there's no sign-up disc available for non-Internet users (if such a thing still exists).

Tech support ★★★★
tel. 07050 601 875

As well as containing guides to setting up the service, the online help has a useful section geared towards to Web builders. This covers subjects such as using FTP and search engine registration, explaining each issue in a fair amount of depth. If your technical itches still need scratching, Fire-Bug also boasts telephone and email support.

Features ★★★★

Signing up gives you a monster 50Mb of server space for hosting your site, along with as many email addresses as you can think up. The other great thing about this ISP is its Web portal, which is well designed and contains a neat 'Internet' section which steers you towards anything from download sites to Web design utilities.

Overall ★★★★

For anyone interested in setting up their own Web site, Fire-Bug gets a glowing report from us. The service delivers more hosting space than an armchair Webmaster could ever hope to use and the portal features lots of useful information and links relating to Web design.

"More hosting space than an armchair Webmaster could use"

FREE ISP QUICK TEST

iNet Wales

www.inet-wales.co.uk

DESIGNED TO KIT out the valleys with free Net access, iNet offers connections for any type of modem from the laziest 56K device to a speedy 128K number. Its Welsh-themed portal is designed to keep people up to speed on all the latest comings and goings in the principality.

Ease of use ★★★★

Connecting to the ISP is merely a matter of downloading a small piece of software from the site, installing it onto your PC and then letting the miracle of technology take its course as your Internet connection is made. There are five different dial up numbers available, which you'll need to select depending on what type of connection you have.

Tech support ★★
tel. 0906 701 2777

At 50 pence a minute, the technical helpline is not the cheapest around and because the online help is pretty damn sparse it means you're lumbered with it if you have any sort of technical queries or need help setting up. Why not email then? Well, that's what we thought until we realised how long we'd have to wait until the next ice age for a reply.

Features ★★

We don't know whether this ISP is run by Mr Scrooge or not, but it certainly seems that way. There's no free Web space, no newsgroup support, and worst of all no email, although there are assurances that this could change "in the near future". Judging by the speed at which the Web portal is updated however, this could be quite a while.

Overall ★★

Although the service is fairly easy to connect to, you may wish you hadn't bothered when you realise how little it actually provides. True, the connection isn't bad but with no email facility or Web space there seems little point when there are so many other free ISPs around. As for it being an ISP for the beautiful people of Wales, we failed to find much reference to Welshness on the portal at all.

"Online help is pretty sparse"

NAME AND URL	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS	V.90	128k ISDN
Boots Systems http://www.boots.com	999	999	Yes	Premium - 75p	Yes	No
BoS Internet http://www.bosinternet.com	5	0	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Breathe http://www.breathe.com	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
British Library Net http://www.britishlibrary.net	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
BT Access http://www.btclickforbusiness.com	10	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
BT Internet http://www.btinternet.com	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Buy and Sell Net http://www.buyandsell.net	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Callnet UK http://www.callnetuk.com	5	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Care4free http://www.care4free.net	5	15	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Citibank http://www.citibank.com/uk	1	0	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Clearsignals http://www.clearsignals.net	999	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Club 24 Internet http://www.club24.co.uk	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Connect4Free http://www.connect4free.net	999	20	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
Contact Box http://www.contactbox.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Premium - £1.00	Yes	Yes
ConX http://www.conx.co.uk	999	20	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Dabsol http://www.dabsol.co.uk	999	999	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
DellNet http://dellnet.excite.co.uk	5	0	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Devilnet UK http://www.devilnet.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Dial Start http://www.dialstart.net	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Dizzi http://www.dizzi.net	999	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
Doctors Net http://www.doctors.net.uk	1	3	No	Local Rate	Yes	No
Doodah http://www.doodah.co.uk	25	999	Yes	Premium - £1.00	Yes	Yes
Earthlink http://www.earthlink.co.uk	999	25	No	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
Ecosse http://www.ecosse.net	999	999	No	N/A	Yes	Yes
EidosNet http://www.eidosnet.co.uk	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
E-Plus http://www.e-plus.co.uk	999	15	Yes	National Rate	Yes	No
Eseeinternet http://www.eseeinternet.com	999	10	No	N/A	Yes	No
Euphony.net http://www.euphony.net	999	999	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Eurobell http://www.eurobell.net	999	5	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	No
F.I.S. http://www.freeispshares.co.uk	999	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Farming Online http://www.farming.co.uk	999	0	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Fire-Bug http://www.fire-bug.com	999	50	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
Firenet http://www.firenet.ws	999	999	Yes	Unknown	Yes	No

ISP NEWS

WHEN I'M CALLING YAHOO!

It looks like it's been a busy month for Yahoo!. According to Net4Nowt, the multi-national search engine has begun negotiations to enter the potentially lucrative broadband market in the UK. Currently in talks with broadband provider Iomart, Yahoo! UK could be set to follow the lead of its French and German cousins by offering ADSL access. On top of all that, Yahoo.com has been named as the most popular search portal in the UK, by a country mile. The report, from receptional.com, states that the search engine (interestingly, the US .com version as opposed to the UK page) is responsible for some 21% of traffic.

NET NUMBERS CONTINUE TO GROW

A recent report from NetValue (**www.netvalue.com**) claims that there were a staggering 2.7 million new home Internet users in the UK during the first half of this year. This takes the tally of people online in this country to just under 14 million, and works out at an impressive rate of a new user every six seconds. Some three million Net newbies joined the ranks in 2000, so this year looks set to eclipse this figure by some distance.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH www.net4nowt.com net4nowt

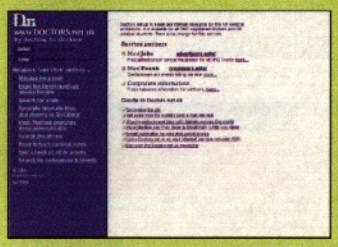
NAME AND URL	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS	V.90	128K ISDN
Fish http://www.fish.co.uk	999	0	Unknown	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Floom.net http://www.floom.net	0	0	No	N/A	Yes	No
Flyer Internet http://internet.flyer.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Free Gratis http://www.freegratis.net	5	5	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes
Free ISP http://www.freeisp.co.uk	999	25	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
Free UK http://www.freeuk.net	999	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Free4All http://www.free4all.co.uk	999	25	Unknown	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Freebeeb http://www.beeb.net	999	20	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	No
Freecall-UK http://www.freecall-uk.co.uk	999	0	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
Freedom 2 Surf http://www.freedom2surf.net	999	25	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes
FreeInternet http://www.free-internet.co.uk	1	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Free'N'Easy http://www.freeneasy.net	999	999	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes
FreeNet http://www.freenet.co.uk	999	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Freenetname http://www.freenetname.co.uk	999	20	Unknown	Free	Yes	No
Freeola.net http://www.freeola.net	999	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Freeserve http://www.freeserve.net	999	15	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Freeway UK http://www.freewayuk.com	5	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Freewire http://www.freewire.net	999	50	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
FreeZone http://www.freezone.co.uk	999	20	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	No
FSB Dial http://www.fsbdial.co.uk	999	0	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Games Terminal http://www.gterminal.net	999	20	Yes	National Rate	Yes	No
Games-World http://www.games-world.net	1	10	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Gateway http://www.gateway2000.co.uk	5	15	Yes	Premium - £1	Yes	Yes
Gay Webmasters Guild http://gay.webmastersguild.co.uk	20	0	No	National Rate	Yes	Yes
GayServe http://www.gayserve.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
Genie Internet http://www.genie.co.uk	1	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Get Free Internet http://www.getfreeinternet.co.uk	999	5	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Get-The-Web http://www.get-the-web.com	999	100	No	Premium - 25p	Yes	No
Global Nomad http://www.globalnomad.co.uk	1	0	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Go There Internet http://www.gothere.uk.com	999	999	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
GoFree http://www.gofree.co.uk	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Go-Free http://www.gofree.to	5	10	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Go-Legend http://www.go-legend.net	999	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Golfzone http://www.golfzone.co.uk	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
GPAnet http://www.gpanet.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Greatxscape http://www.greatxscape.com	999	12	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	No
Handbag.com http://www.handbag.com	20	0	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
HBC21 http://www.hbc21.com	0	0	No	Unknown	Yes	No
Hemscott.net http://www.hemscott.net	5	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Here.co.uk http://portal.here.co.uk	999	999	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
HMV http://hmv.yahoo.co.uk	999	0	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Hotlinks http://www.hotlinks.co.uk	0	0	No	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Hot-Toast http://www.hot-toast.com	999	999	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
i12 http://www.i12.com	999	500	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
IC24 http://www.ic24.net	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
ICLWAY http://www.iclway.co.uk	5	15	No	Local Rate	Yes	No
Icom43 http://www.icom43.net	999	15	No	Premium - 75p	Yes	No
In2Home http://www.in2home.net/signup	5	15	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	No
iNet Wales http://www.inet-wales.co.uk	0	0	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Intelynx http://www.intelynx.net	999	20	Yes	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
Internet-Today http://www.internet-today.co.uk	999	15	Yes	Premium - 75p	Yes	No

FREE ISP QUICK TEST

Doctors.net

www.doctors.net.uk

NOTHING TO DO with the awful daytime TV drama of the same name, Doctors provides free Internet access specifically for people in the profession and medical students. Through it's ISP partners, the service promises to deliver a fast connection, especially when connecting to the Doctors.net.uk portal.



Ease of use ★★★

To use the service you must firstly be a member of the Doctors.net.uk site. This means you must firstly be a doctor (or a medical student). If, like us, you thought that a tracheotomy was a type of wind instrument, this factor is a bit of a stumbling block. However, if you are a quack, or training to be one, all you need do is register with the site, download the installation software or order the free CD and you're away.

Tech support ★★★★
tel. 0845 355 5678

It's nice to see a local rate phone support line with a free ISP, and even nicer to get someone on the other end who actually seems to have a sound knowledge of the why's and wherefore's of the Net. The online support is geared towards doctors who may be new to this Internet lark, so it covers all the basics of browsing and managing email.

Features ★★★

Although you only get the one email alias and a mere 3 meg of storage space, this should be ample for most newcomers and casual Web builders. The Doctors portal contains some marvellous medical resources, including job searches, news and the facility to have Medline databases searches performed automatically while you sleep.

Overall ★★★

If you're in the healing business, this ISP is probably worth a look as it gives you speedy Net access along with a pool of resources dedicated to the medical profession. The service is easy to connect to and the helpdesk seems to give an accurate diagnosis of technical problems.

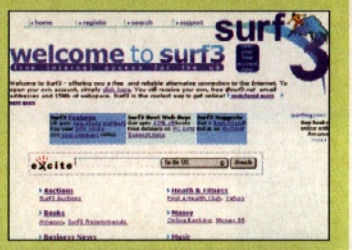
"The portal contains some marvellous medical resources"

FREE ISP QUICK TEST

Surf3

www.surf3.net

DUBBED BY ITSELF as "the coolest way to get online" this ISP, like many of its counterparts, promises to offer a free and reliable connection to the Net. However, does it really prove to be the cool cucumber it alleges, or will it just wipe-out under a wave of competition from the big sharks of the free ISP waters?



Ease of use ★★★★

Signing up and registering is fairly smooth, involving nothing more than tapping out your details and choice of email address into the online form before being issued with a username. Once you've downloaded the software you're then just a couple of clicks away from free Net access. There's also a free sign up CD available if you're not already online.

Tech support ★★★
tel. 0906 960 533

The online help takes you through the basics of setting up and establishing a connection with handy tutorials. There's also a hotchpotch of information about using email, Web space and newsgroups, even if this a little sketchy in places. On the whole, we found the guy on the telephone support line to be fairly switched on and the reply to the email query we sent came back on the same day.

Features ★★★

While tempting customers with a combination of 15Mb of Web space and unlimited '@surf3.net' email address, the ISP offers no real unique freebies. Having said this, the portal is not bad and would make a good home page as it contains links some of the Web's most essential ports of call.

Overall ★★★

Though it doesn't exactly ride on the crest of a wave, Surf3 is reliable enough to keep most home users happy. The quality of the connection is pretty good, giving you the ability to download and browse at a pacey rate. We also liked the 'Surfing points' on the portal, which provide tips and links on how to use the Net to make life easier.

"Surf3 is reliable enough to keep most home users happy"

NAME AND URL	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS	V.90	128K ISDN
IofM.net http://www.iofm.net	999	999	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
ItsGoodToGive http://www.itsgoodtogive.co.uk	1	0	No	Unknown	Yes	No
IXUK http://www.ixuk.com	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
jellyPeople.com http://www.jellypeople.com	999	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
jings http://www.jings.com	999	999	Yes	National Rate	Yes	No
jolt http://www.jolt.co.uk	999	999	No	Unknown	Yes	No
JungleLink http://www.junglelink.net	999	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Kickon http://www.kickon.com	10	15	No	Premium - 60p	Yes	No
Kirion http://www.kirion.com	999	25	Yes	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
Knowall http://www.knowall.co.uk	0	10	No	Unknown	No	No
KZuk.net http://www.kzuk.net	999	999	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
LibertySurf http://www.libertysurf.co.uk	999	50	No	National Rate	Yes	No
Lifestyle http://www.lifestyle.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
LineOne http://www.lineone.net	5	50	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
LogicSurf Internet http://www.logicsurf.net	999	15	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Loyal Mail http://www.loyalmail.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Free	Yes	No
Madasafish http://www.madasafish.com	999	999	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	No
ManUFree.net http://www.manutd.com/manufreenet	5	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Max2 http://www.max2.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Premium - £1	Yes	Yes
Mersinet http://www.mersinet.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
Message http://www.messages.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Unknown	Yes	No
micromundi.net http://www.micromundi.net	999	0	Unknown	Standard BT	Yes	Yes
Millionserve http://www.millionserve.net	999	25	Yes	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
Ministry of Sound http://www.ministryofsound.net	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Minx http://www.minx.co.uk	999	999	Yes	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
MSCable.com http://www.mscable.com	5	0	No	Standard BT	Yes	Yes
MSN Freeweb http://www.msnfreeweb.co.uk	0	0	No	National Rate	Yes	No
MT Click http://www.mtclick.com	0	0	No	N/A	Yes	No
MWfree.net http://www.mwfree.net	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
MyETI http://www.eti.uk.com	999	15	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
NASCR http://www.nascr.net	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Nationwide http://www.nationwide.co.uk	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Natwest.com http://www.natwest.com	0	0	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
NetDirect Online http://www.instant.ndo.com	999	20	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Netscape Online http://www.netscapeonline.co.uk	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
NHS People http://www.nhspeople.net	5	15	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Nownet http://www.nownet.co.uk	5	15	Yes	Unknown	No	No
NTL World http://www.ntlworld.com	5	10	Yes	Premium - £1	Yes	No
Oceanfree http://www.oceanfree.net	999	0	No	Premium - £1	Yes	No
Oik http://www.oik.co.uk	5	0	Yes	Premium - £1	Yes	Yes
Onet http://www.onet.co.uk	999	30	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Orange.net http://www.orange.net	1	15	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
OrchidServe http://www.orchidserve.com	999	20	No	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
Oxfree http://www.oxfree.com	999	20	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes
PeoplesNet http://www.peoplesnet.net	5	25	Yes	N/A	Yes	No
Photoshot http://www.photoshot.com	5	15	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
PlusNet http://www.plus.net	999	999	Yes	National Rate	Yes	No
POBox http://www.pobox.co.uk	1	0	No	N/A	Yes	No
Portland http://www.portland.co.uk	999	15	Unknown	N/A	Yes	
Prontoserve http://www.Prontoserve.net	999	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	No	Yes
Quista http://www.rbos.co.uk/quista	5	10	Yes	N/A	Yes	No

IN ASSOCIATION WITH www.net4nowt.com net4nowt

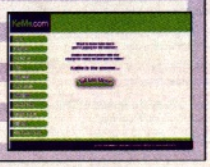
NAME AND URL	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPOT COSTS	V.90	128K ISDN
Rapidial http://www.Rapidial.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Route56 http://www.Route56.co.uk	999	5	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
RugbyWeb http://www.rugbyweb.co.uk	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
RYA On-line http://www.rya-online.net	999	10	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Scannet http://www.Scannet.co.uk	3	5	Yes	N/A	No	Yes
SchoolVfree http://www.schoolvfree.com	999	15	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	No
Scotfree-UK http://www.scotfree-uk.net	5	25	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	Yes
Sheetmetal.com http://www.sheetmetal.com	0	0	No	Standard BT	Yes	No
Shetland Internet http://www.shetland.co.uk	999	999	No	N/A	Yes	Yes
Skynow http://www.skynow.co.uk	5	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
Smartone http://www.smartone.co.uk	1	20	Yes	Premium	Yes	No
Sniff Out http://www.sniffout.net	999	999	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
South West Net http://www.swest.co.uk	999	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	No
Sparticus.net http://www.sparticus.net	999	25	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	Yes
Sprintnet http://www.sprintnet.co.uk	999	5	No	N/A	Yes	Yes
StormNet http://www.storm-online.com	5	50	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
StrayDuck http://www.strayduck.com	999	25	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	Yes
Supanet http://www.supanet.com	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Surf&Save http://www.surfandsave.co.uk	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Surf3 http://www.surf3.net	999	15	Yes	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
SurfAnytime http://www.surfanytime.co.uk	15	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Surfree http://www.surfree.co.uk	1	15	No	Standard BT	Yes	No
Tellnet http://www.tellnet.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
TescoNet http://www.tesco.net	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
The Hornets http://www.thehornets.net	6	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
The Mail http://www.themail.co.uk	1	50	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	No
Themutual.net http://www.themutual.net	5	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
The-Whale.com http://www.The-Whale.com	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Thrust World http://www.thrustworld.com	0	0	No	N/A	Yes	No
Tollon http://www.tollon.net	5	5	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Totalise http://www.totalise.net	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Totalserve http://www.totalserve.co.uk	999	999	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
UK Fantastic http://www.ukfantastic.net	999	20	Yes	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
UK Free http://www.uk4free.net	1	20	Yes	Premium - £1	Yes	Yes
UK Online http://www.ukonline.co.uk	999	999	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
UK People.net http://www.ukpeople.net	999	25	Yes	Premium - 75p	Yes	No

HEAD TO HEAD

ABEL VS KEME

TWO UNMETERED ISPs COMPARED

Abel DIAL Anytime		KeMe
www.abel.co.uk	**URL**	www.keme.com
No	**Is there a set up charge?**	No
£27.99	**Monthly charges?**	£14.95
24/7 up to 100 hours/month	**When do you get free access?**	24/7
Yes	**Are Macs supported?**	Yes
Unlimited	**Number of POP3 email accounts?**	Unlimited
50Mb	**Amount of free Web space?**	50Mb
Three hours	**What is the cut-off time?**	Four hours



FREE ISP QUICK TEST

BuyAndSell.net

www.buyandsell.net

THIS ISP STATES that its goal is to provide reliable free Internet access for the whole of the United Kingdom. However, the trouble is that there are about three trillion other free ISPs trying to do exactly the same, and we have our doubts whether or not EarthLink has the ability to become the next AOL or Freeserve.

Ease of use ★★★★

You really don't have to be a genius to figure out the registration process for Buy & Sell. After agreeing to the mammoth terms and conditions of the service, it's just a case of filling in your details and choosing an email address. The dial-up software can then be automatically configured for your PC.

Tech support ★★★★
tel. 0901 929 3000

As paying 50p a minute only to sit in a queue for ages is not much fun, this ISP thankfully delivers a cracking online helpdesk which is a dream to navigate. This features all the details on how to activate and set up your email account and Web space, as well as boasting an online trouble-shooter and a glossary of Internet terms.

Features ★★★★

As well as the familiar scenario of unlimited email addresses and 20Mb of Web space, Buy & Sell also offers new customers the option of acquiring free shares in the company. This is done by building up 'epoints', which depend on the amount of time you spend online. You can also earn them for using different Buy & Sell services such as e-shopping and auctions.

Overall ★★★★

With an impressive array of shopping, shares and support, this ISP delivers the goods in terms of quality of service and features. The online help is readable and practical and the company hasn't been frugal with its rationing of Web space or email. Judging by what we experienced, it's worth getting signed up and getting your hands on those free shares.

"Delivers a cracking online helpdesk which is a dream to navigate"

PAY ISP QUICK TEST

Easynet

www.easynet.co.uk

THE PURPOSE OF paying for Internet access is to get a quicker and more sturdy connection to the Net, and that's exactly what Easynet promise for £11.99 of hard currency a month. The ISP believes its investment in top notch software and hardware will bring "added value" to those who are willing to fork out for the service.

Ease of use ★★★★

Once you've spewed out all your personal details onto the simple forms, you're given the choice of paying monthly or annually by credit or debit card. You can also plump for the direct debit option by calling the helpdesk. After saying goodbye to your cash, your PC's settings will be automatically updated and a few days later you'll get a start up CD and a lovely instruction manual.

Tech support ★★★★★
tel. 0845 333 4444

As you might gather from its name, Easynet aim to make things as straightforward as possible for its users and the online help is a pleasure to navigate, giving you comprehensive advice on email, creating a Web site, and using the various Easynet services. If for some strange reason you fail to find any answers online, there's reliable local rate telephone support available around the clock.

Features ★★★★★

As you'd probably expect for £12 a month, the service is choc-full of quality features. As well as a mouth-watering combination of infinite email addresses and unlimited Web space, the ISP offers several 'Easy' services. These include a messaging facility that lets you access email, voice messages and faxes wherever you are in the world. Oh yes, and you can pick up a .co.uk domain name for free!

Overall ★★★★★

If you're willing and able to pay the £11.99 a month, you'll enjoy a superb service from Easynet. Unlike using a free or unmetered ISP, you shouldn't experience any problems with connection speeds or cut-offs and you get access to several useful services. What's more, not many other service providers out there will offer you a free domain name.

"You can pick up a .co.uk domain name for free"

NAME AND URL	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS	V.90	128K ISDN
UK2.net http://uk2.net	0	0	No	N/A	Yes	Yes
UKU http://www.uku.co.uk	999	999	Yes	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
Uni Net http://www.uni-net.co.uk	1	0	No	N/A	Yes	No
Unisonfree http://www.unisonfree.net	999	999	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	No
VirginNet http://www.virgin.net	5	10	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	No
Vispa http://www.vispa.co.uk	999	15	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Vodafone.net http://www.vodafone.net	2	0	No	Premium - 60p	Yes	No
Waitrose.com http://www.waitrose.com	999	20	Yes	Free	Yes	No
Waterstones http://waterstones.yahoo.co.uk	999	0	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
WEBLeicester http://www.webleicester.co.uk	999	999	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes
Welshnet http://www.welshnet.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	No
WH Smith http://www.whsmith.co.uk	999	12	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Which?Online http://www.which.net	5	5	Unknown	Premium - £1	Yes	No
Whitnash http://www.whitnash.net	999	5	No	N/A	Yes	Yes
WinBiz http://www.winbiz.co.uk	0	0	No	Standard BT	Yes	No
Wireplay http://www.gameplay.com/wireplay	0	0	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
World Online Tiscali Classic http://www.worldonline.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
X-Stream http://www.x-stream.com	10	50	No	Free	Yes	No
YahooOnline http://www.yahoo.co.uk/yahooclick/infopages	999	0	No	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Zoom http://www.zoom.co.uk	999	20	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	No

PAY ISPs

WANT TO PAY FOR YOUR SERVICE PROVIDER AND BE ASSURED OF TOP QUALITY ACCESS? HERE ARE SOME OF THE BEST...

ISP NAME AND URL	COST PER MONTH	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE	SUPPORT COSTS	V 90	128K ISDN
BT Internet http://www.btinternet.com	£9.99	5	10Mb	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Cablenet http://www.cablenet.net	£4.95	Unlimited	50Mb	Standard BT	Yes	No
CIX http://www.cix.co.uk	£6.25	Unlimited	5Mb	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
CompuServe http://www.compuserve.co.uk	£7.50	7	10Mb	National Rate	Yes	No
Demon http://www.demon.net	£11.75	Unlimited	20Mb	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
Direct Connection http://www.dircon.net	£4.70	Unlimited	20	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
Easynet http://www.easynet.co.uk	£11.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Local Rate	Yes	No
Entanet http://www.enta.net	£0.00	Unlimited	20	National Rate	Yes	Yes
KingstonInternet http://www.kingston-internet.net	£5.00	Unlimited	20	Standard BT	Yes	No
Netkonect.net http://www.netkonect.net	£0.00	Unlimited	Mb	National Rate	Yes	No
Nildram http://www.nildram.net	£5.88	Unlimited	25	Standard BT	Yes	No
PipexDial http://www.dial.pipex.com	£15.00	12	50	National Rate	Yes	Yes
SAQInternet http://www.saqnet.co.uk	£0.00	Unlimited	5	National Rate	Yes	Yes
U-NET http://www.u-net.net	£12.00	Unlimited	25	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
Zoo Internet http://www.zoo.co.uk	£6.95	2	5	National Rate	Yes	No

BROADBAND/ADSL ISPs

GET SUPER-FAST, ALWAYS-ON NET ACCESS FROM THESE BROADBAND SERVICE PROVIDERS

NAME AND URL	CONNECTION	INSTALLATION FEE	COST (P/M)	DOWNLOAD SPEEDS	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE	NEWS GROUPS
Alcom Internix (business) 0512 Kbps www.adsl-internet-access.co.uk	ADSL	£260.00	£105.69	From 512Kbps	0	0	No
Andrews & Arnold (consumer) www.aa.net	ADSL	£176.25	£52.88	512Kbps	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
AppleOnline (consumer) www.appleonline.net	ADSL	£150.00	£40.00	512Kbps	Unlimited	25	Yes
Atlantic Telecom www.atlantic-telecom.com	Wireless	£0.00	£49.99	2Mbps	5	50	Yes
Beyond Access (business) 1Mbps www.beyondaccess.co.uk	ADSL	£305.50	£0.00	From 512Kbps	Unlimited	100	Yes
BT Openworld (consumer) www.btopenworld.com	ADSL	£150.00	£39.99	500Kbps	10	20	Unknown

IN ASSOCIATION WITH www.net4nowt.com net4nowt

NAME AND URL	CONNECTION	INSTALLATION FEE	COST (P/M)	DOWNLOAD SPEEDS	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE Mb	128K ISDN
ClaraNet (business) 1Mbps www.clara.net	ADSL	£305.50	£176.25	From 512Kbps	15	80	Yes
Colt (business) 0513Kbps www.oncolt.com	ADSL	£305.50	£149.23	From 512Kbps	Unlimited	10	Yes
Demon (consumer) www.demon.net	ADSL	£150.00	£49.99	512Kbps	Unlimited	20	Yes
Easynet (business) 0512Kbps www.uk.easynet.net	ADSL	£323.13	£92.83	From 512Kbps	10	0	Unknown
Eclipse Networking (consumer) www.eclipse.net.uk	ADSL	£176.25	£57.58	512Kbps	5	10	Yes
edNET www.ednet.co.uk	ADSL	£0.00	£70.50	512Kbps	Unlimited	25	Yes
Europe Online www.europeonline.com	Satellite	£0.00	£12.50	2Mbps	5	0	Yes
Freedom2Surf (business) 0512Kbps www.freedom2surf.net	ADSL	£327.83	£99.88	From 512Kbps	Unlimited	25	Yes
FreeservePlus Home www.freeserve.com	ADSL	£150.00	£39.99	512Kbps	Unlimited	15	Yes
intY (business) 0512Kbps www.inty.net	ADSL	£205.63	£116.33	From 512Kbps	Unlimited	5	Yes
Inweb (business) 0512Kbps www.inweb.net.uk	ADSL	£323.13	£117.49	From 512Kbps	Unlimited	10	Yes
Iomart CopperSurf SOHO 500 www.iomartadsl.com	ADSL	£117.50	£111.63	512Kbps	Unlimited	25	Yes
Jings 500U 24 www.jings.com	ADSL	£0.00	£55.95	From 512Kbps	Unlimited	25	Yes
Lavron (consumer) www.lavron.net	ADSL	£199.75	£58.75	512Kbps	0	0	No
Madasafish Dazzle 500U PLUS www.madasafish.com	ADSL	£180.00	£59.99	From 512Kbps	Unlimited	25	Yes
MetroNet (consumer) www.metronet.co.uk	ADSL	£176.25	£58.74	512Kbps	5	20	Yes
netAxis (business) 0512Kbps www.netaxis.co.uk	ADSL	£352.50	£116.33	From 512Kbps	Unlimited	10	Yes
Netscalibur (business) 0512Kbps www.netscalibur.co.uk	ADSL	£323.13	£135.13	From 512Kbps	Unlimited	20	Yes
NewNet (business) 0512Kbps www.newnet.co.uk	ADSL	£305.50	£129.25	From 512Kbps	Unlimited	100	Yes
Nildram (business) 0512Kbps www.getadsl.co.uk	ADSL	£305.50	£129.25	From 512Kbps	Unlimited	10	Yes
NTL www.ntl.co.uk	Cable	£174.00	£19.99	512Kbps	5	10	Yes
Onyx Internet (business) 2Mbps www.onyx.net	ADSL	£352.50	£146.88	From 512Kbps	Unlimited	25	Yes
Pipex Home Professional www.dsl.pipex.net	ADSL	£188.00	£58.74	512Kbps	12	50	Yes
PlusNet (consumer) www.plus.net	ADSL	£150.00	£45.00	512Kbps	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes
Quik Internet (business) 2Mbps www.quikinternet.co.uk	ADSL	£305.50	£203.28	From 512Kbps	10	0	Yes
Realtouch (business) www.realtouch.net	Satellite	£4,694.13	£411.25	300Kbps	Unlimited	0	Yes
Skystorm www.skystorm.net	Satellite	£0.00	£17.63	400Kbps	0	0	No
Starspeeder www.starspeeder.co.uk	Satellite	£0.00	£17.63	400Kbps	No	Yes	Yes
Supanet - 0512Kbps www.supanet.com	ADSL	£305.50	£115.15	400Kbps	Unlimited	20	Yes
Surfanytime (consumer) www.surfanytime.co.uk	ADSL	£305.50	£117.49	From 512Kbps	15	10	Yes
Tele2 (business) www.tele2.co.uk	Wireless	£175.08	£34.99	512Kbps	Unlimited	15	Yes
Vispa (consumer) www.vispaconnect.co.uk	ADSL	£150.00	£45.00	64Kbps to 512Kbps	Unlimited	15	Yes
World Online (consumer) www.worldonline.co.uk/adsl	ADSL	£150.00	£39.99	512Kbps	Unlimited	25	Yes
Zen (consumer) www.zenadsl.com	ADSL	£150.00	£50.00	512Kbps	5	50	Yes

ISP NEWS BYTES

USERS WANT SPEED AT ANY COST

Internet users in the UK are no longer obsessed by the cost of their Net service, and are instead concerned more with connection speed. According to a report by J.D. Power and Associates, some 37 per cent believe that speed is the number one factor influencing how satisfied subscribers are with their ISPs. The survey also ranks AOL as the top ISP in terms of customer satisfaction, with the giant provider leading in four of the seven sections of the survey.

YET MORE SERVICES FROM ECOSSETEL

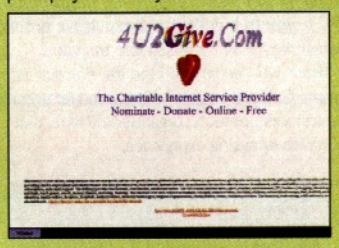
In a time when so many freecall ISPs are falling by the wayside, EcosseTel (**www.ecossetel.net**) has compounded the misery of the failures by launching even more 0800 services. The newest package, named BcomLite, manages to find another niche market in the ISP field, and is aimed at those who want access during the day. Unmetered access is available from 6am to 6pm on Monday to Friday for just under a tenner a month. Ideal for anyone who doesn't have to spend their week days in a sweaty horrible office, calls outside the time limits are charged at half a penny a minute. At this stage, only 1,000 packages are available, so you're going to have to be quick.

FREE ISP QUICK TEST

4u2Give

www.4u2give.com

DESIGNED FOR CARING sorts who spread a spot of happiness to those less fortunate than themselves, this ISP promises to donate all its call profits to its subscribers' favourite charities. You can even nominate your local school, church group or any worthwhile cause that you think is deserving of a donation (except perhaps your holiday fund!)



Ease of use ★★★

We experienced little difficulties in signing up to the service other than racking our brains over which worthy cause to nominate on the online registration. Once this was out of the way though, you just need to fill in a few details, download the dial-up software and hang on for your email account to be created, which should be sorted within a day. No start up disc though.

Tech support ★★
tel. 01279 722 933

If you have a problem, if no-one else can help, and if you can find them, then maybe you can hire the A-Team – because we found it nigh on impossible to get through to these guys. Once we did, though, the advice was helpful if a little brief. Try as we might we failed to find any semblance of support online so if you have a problem with the service, the chances are it won't be resolved straight away.

Features ★★

With only one email alias and diddly squat in the way of Web space, 4u2give offers little in the way of extras for serious Internet users. Although the service's own Web portal is pretty hideous, it does contain links to other charitable sites and explains how you can donate as you shop online, which can only be a good thing really.

Overall ★★

Although it's heart is most definitely in the right place, and we wouldn't want to put people off giving money to charity, this ISP unfortunately doesn't really make the grade. The technical support was pretty poor and you don't get much in the way of added extras.

"Only one email alias and diddly squat in the way of Web space"

BUYERS' GUIDE

IMPROVE YOUR INTERNET EXPERIENCE WITH THESE ADD-ONS AND EXTRAS – ALL TRIED AND TESTED BY PRACTICAL INTERNET'S EXPERTS

Buying new hardware and software for your PC or Mac can be a tricky task. You often have to choose between products which cost the same price and seem to offer identical features. What's more, high street shops often encourage you to buy the most expensive products – even though they may be unsuitable for you.

This is why we've compiled the *Practical Internet* Buyers' Guide. It's been written with Net users in mind and features products, organised by type, that enhance your Web browsing experience.

The kinds of products we look at include external modems, Webcams, WYSIWYG designers, graphics packages, software, hardware and MP3 players. We've published more detailed reports on these products in the past, so if you want more information, take a note of the issue number shown at the top of each section, then turn to page 161 or call **01202 200 200** to order a back copy.

The information here is updated every month, but please note, however, that all of the prices are only guidelines provided by the manufacturers, so shop around on the Web to find yourself the very best deal.

KEYBOARDS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 54)

Logitech Internet Keyboard

Price
£20

Contact
020 7309 0127 www.logitech.com

What's good?
Highly useful 'Internet' keys to help you browse the Web. Comes with a wrist-rest

What's bad?
Not as fully featured as some other keyboards

Overall ★★★★★

Logitech Desktop iTouch

Price
£80

Contact
020 7309 0127 www.logitech.com

What's good?
A cordless keyboard and mouse combination so you can work away from your PC.

What's bad?
It's a bit expensive. Do you know anyone who'd spend almost 80 notes on a keyboard?

Overall ★★★★

Microsoft Natural Keyboard Pro

Price
£50

Contact
03450 002000 www.microsoft.com

What's good?
Most comfortable of all keyboards we tested. 16 function buttons.

What's bad?
Still a bit on the pricey side

Overall ★★★★★

Ultimate 2000

Price
£25

Contact
0870 4580011 www.euro-tech.co.uk

What's good?
Comes with free cordless mouse. Function keys give you 18 predetermined actions

What's bad?
Doesn't come with a wrist-rest

Overall ★★★★

EZKey EZ3000 Smart Keyboard

Price
approx £20-£30

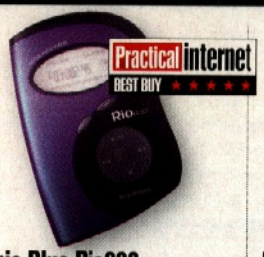
Contact
01952 299882 www.agci.co.uk

What's good?
21 additional function keys. Curved space bar.

What's bad?
Looks a little too much like an iMac keyboard. Potentially dodgy installation software

Overall ★★★★

MP3 PLAYERS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 50)



Sonic Blue Rio600

Price
£170

Contact
01189 444400 www.diamondmm.co.uk

What's good?
Several playback modes. Vibrant and pacy sound. Expandable up to 340Mb.

What's bad?
Only 32Mb memory as standard.

Overall ★★★★★

Iomega HipZip

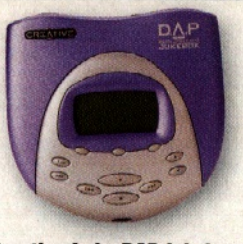
Price
£290

Contact
(020) 7365 9527 www.iomega-europe.com

What's good?
Uses removable media instead of Flash memory, which is much cheaper.

What's bad?
Bulkier and heavier than the Rio. Expensive.

Overall ★★★★



Creative Labs DAP Jukebox

Price
£350

Contact
(012450) 265265 www.nomadworld.com

What's good?
Holds up to 6Gb of music, equivalent to 100 hours of music.

What's bad?
Larger than most players. Eats up batteries. Can't transfer MP3s back to PC.

Overall ★★★★

Smart MP3 Player

Price
£124

Contact
(020) 8668 0016 www.jedan.co.uk

What's good?
Plays both normal and MP3 CDs. Decent sound quality.

What's bad?
Very odd interface. Not compatible with WMA or supplied with encoding software.

Overall ★★★★

Samsung Yepp YP-NEU

Price
£230

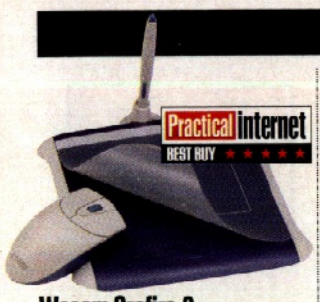
Contact
(0800) 521652 www.yepparty.com

What's good?
Looks rather beautiful. Comes supplied with 64Mb of memory.

What's bad?
Poor sound. Sparse features. Limited LCD display of information.

Overall ★★★★

COMPUTER MICE (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 51)



Wacom Grafire 2

Price
£75

Contact
020 8200 8282 www.unlimited.co.uk

What's good?
A graphics tablet with cordless mouse and wand. Great for graphics manipulation

What's bad?
Takes a bit of getting used to

Overall ★★★★★

Logitech iFeel Mouseman

Price
£40

Contact
020 7309 0127 www.logitech.com

What's good?
Ball-less mouse, so no need for a mouse mat. Users can 'feel' buttons on the page.

What's bad?
Still a bit pricey for what it does. The 'feel' aspect is limited.

Overall ★★★★

Vivanco T-Light Mouse

Price
£10

Contact
01442 403020 www.vivanco.com

What's good?
Cheap, cheerful and adequate. Ambidextrous design.

What's bad?
The scroll wheel is somewhat wishy-washy

Overall ★★★★

Kensington TurboRing

Price
£40

Contact
0800 252359 www.kensington.com

What's good?
Full-featured trackball device, which can be used by left or right-handers

What's bad?
Cumbersome to the beginner. Picks up dust like nobody's business

Overall ★★★★

Microsoft Trackball Optical

Price
£35

Contact
0345 000 2000 www.microsoft.com

What's good?
A standard mouse with added trackball functionality. Very resilient

What's bad?
Absolutely no use to anyone left-handed.

Overall ★★★★

SCANNERS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 53)

Microtek ScanMaker 4600

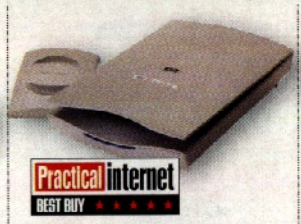
Price
£116

Contact
01908 317797 www.microtek.nl

What's good?
Standard and advanced modes. Prints are sharp and rich in colour. Works on Mac.

What's bad?
Not the quickest scanner in the world.

Overall ★★★★



HP5370c

Price
£179

Contact
08705 474747 www.hp.com/uk

What's good?
Quick, and image quality is excellent, with impressive colour fidelity.

What's bad?
The interface isn't the most friendly we've seen

Overall ★★★★★

Epson 1240u Photo

Price
£229

Contact
0800 220546 www.epson.co.uk

What's good?
Has a transparency adaptor. Scans have Accurate colours, plenty of detail.

What's bad?
Expensive. Aimed at experts.

Overall ★★★★

Agfa e50

Price
£199

Contact
020 8231 4903 www.agfa.co.uk

What's good?
Good-looking, well-made scanner. Produces excellent scans quickly and easily.

What's bad?
Slow in comparison to the other scanners on test.

Overall ★★★★

Canon N656U

Price
£116

Contact
0121 680 8062 www.canon.co.uk

What's good?
Doesn't need a separate mains unit. Compact.

What's bad?
Average scanning speed. Scans are nothing special.

Overall ★★★★

PCMCIA MODEMS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 41)

Zoom PC Card 56k Dual Mode

Price
£79.99

Contact
0870 720 0060 www.zoom.com

What's good?
The cheapest modem on test, and the most reliable and easiest to install.

What's bad?
Supplied software is for Windows only.

Overall ★★★★

Eicon Diva Mobile V.90 Card

Price
£229

Contact
0208 967 8080 www.eicom.com

What's good?
The Eicon provides impressive performance and boasts an ISDN-2 terminal adaptor.

What's bad?
It's an expensive luxury.

Overall ★★★★

Xircom RealPort 56 Card

Price
£141

Contact
01256 332552 www.xircom.com

What's good?
It's neither cheap nor expensive, so the Xircom is a middle-of-the-range modem.

What's bad?
Very lacklustre in performance and the speaker appeared to be faulty.

Overall ★★★

Psion Dacom Gold Card Global 56k

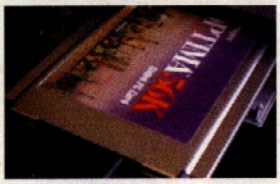
Price
£199

Contact
01908 261 686 www.psiondacom.com

What's good?
The Dacom is very user friendly and easy to install.

What's bad?
Not great value for money and refused to connect to one of our test ISPs at V.90.

Overall ★★★★



Hayes Optima V.90

Price
£209

Contact
0870 720 0060 www.hayes.co.uk

What's good?
Plenty of features and easy to install. The Optima provided reasonable speeds.

What's bad?
Didn't integrate well with all ISPs and expensive for what you get.

Overall ★★★

DIGITAL CAMERAS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 52)

Kodak DC3800

Price
£349

Contact
0870 243 0270 www.kodak.co.uk

What's good?
Uses a handy USB card reader. High quality LCD screen. Usual good Kodak menu system.

What's bad?
No way of tweaking exposure. JPEG is only storage format.

Overall ★★★★

Nikon Coolpix 880

Price
£680

Contact
0800 230220 www.nikon.co.uk

What's good?
Impressive 3.34 megapixel count. Loads of features. Compact and nice to handle.

What's bad?
It's not that cheap.

Overall ★★★★★

Olympus C990 Zoom

Price
£441

Contact
0800 720070 www.olympus.co.uk

What's good?
Features an excellent image playback function. Uncompressed TIFF mode.

What's bad?
Bizarre shutter method. Bulky, to say the least.

Overall ★★★★

Canon Digital Ixus

Price
£439

Contact
0121 680 8062 www.canon.co.uk

What's good?
Small and stylish. Good zoom lens. Excellent image quality.

What's bad?
A triumph of style over substance.

Overall ★★★★

Fuji Finepix40i

Price
£466

Contact
0207 465 5745 www.fujifilm.co.uk

What's good?
Doubles up as an MP3 player. Offers the same quality as a 4-megapixel camera.

What's bad?
Only comes supplied with 8Mb of SmartMedia memory.

Overall ★★★

MONITORS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 44)

CTX VL710T

Price
£193.88

Contact
01943 810800 www.ctxeurope.com

What's good?
A well priced monitor with no onscreen flicker. It benefits from a fairly flat screen.

What's bad?
It has few connections and no USB hub that's featured on pricier models.

Overall ★★★★

ADI MicroScan

Price
£269.08

Contact
020 8327 1900 www.adieurope.com

What's good?
A pleasantly-styled monitor with a built-in microphone. It has a four-port USB hub.

What's bad?
Expensive – but that's the price of buying a top quality monitor.

Overall ★★★★★

Iiyama A705MT

Price
£245.56

Contact
01438 745482 www.iiyama.co.uk

What's good?
You get the option of buying a monitor stand that incorporates a USB hub.

What's bad?
Features are thin on the ground and the user interface is not very 'friendly'.

Overall ★★★★

Sony E200

Price
£276.13

Contact
0990 424424 www.sony-europe.com

What's good?
This monitor boasts a 17-inch flat screen tube and very easy-to-use onscreen menus.

What's bad?
No microphones and no hubs. The screen refresh rate at max res is a flickery 65Hz.

Overall ★★★★

Philips 107B

Price
£276.13

Contact
0208 689 4444 www.pcstuff.philips.com

What's good?
A compact 17in monitor, you can alter the screen settings from Windows.

What's bad?
The screen is not completely flat and thus some errors are introduced. It's also pricey.

Overall ★★★★

WAP PHONES (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 56)

Motorola T260

Price
£200 (with contract)

Contact
0500 555555 www.mot.com

What's good?
Is tri-band, can record voice notes, can receive calls even when looking at WAP sites.

What's bad?
User interface is starting to look a bit tired, is quite expensive.

Overall ★★★★

Ericsson T29s

Price
£160

Contact
01483 303666 www.ericsson.co.uk

What's good?
Nice and compact, menu is easy to navigate, comes with a 'help' system.

What's bad?
The compact size does mean that the screen is very small.

Overall ★★★★

Sony CMD-MZ5

Price
£400

Contact
0990 111999 www.sony.co.uk

What's good?
Displays Web sites as well as WAP sites, comes with a music player.

What's bad?
The only downside is the price – but it is a heavily-featured phone.

Overall ★★★★

Trium Mondo

Price
£350-£400 (with contract)

Contact
01707 276100 www.trium.net

What's good?
Is a PDA as well as a phone, can browse the Web and send emails, good speech quality.

What's bad?
It is expensive, and because of its features, is rather large.

Overall ★★★★

Siemens SL45

Price
£200-£300

Contact
0345 400700 www.siemens.co.uk

What's good?
Nice big screen, has an MP3 music player, good battery life.

What's bad?
Can't upgrade the headphones, data rates are slow.

Overall ★★★★

PDAS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 47)

HP Jornada 545

Price
£369

Contact
08705 474747 www.hp.com/jornada

What's good?
Handy for transferring files or images quickly. Fairly quick processor inside.

What's bad?
Has a Type-1 slot, so is incompatible with some devices. Not enough RAM on board.

Overall ★★★★

Palm Inc Palm V

Price
£249

Contact
020 7365 9820 www.palm.com

What's good?
Inexpensive. The 'grafitti' handwriting recognition tool works exceptionally well.

What's bad?
Uninspiring display. RAM isn't backed up, so backing up is essential for keeping data.

Overall ★★★★

Nokia p110i Communicator

Price
£280

Contact
0990 002110 www.nokia.com

What's good?
Cellphone is built in. Crisp, high-resolution display is nothing short of superb.

What's bad?
The cellular functionality is somewhat behind the times these days.

Overall ★★★★

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

Handspring Visor Deluxe

Price
£199

Contact
020 7309 0314 www.handspring.com

What's good?
Stunning design. Highly expandable. Good value for money.

What's bad?
Resolution of display isn't as crisp or sharp as with other PDAs.

Overall ★★★★★

Psion Series 5MX

Price
£429

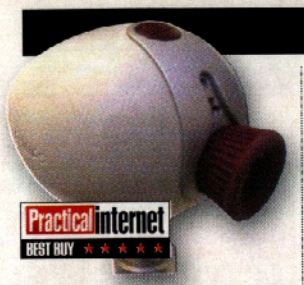
Contact
0990 143050 www.series5mx.com

What's good?
Nifty greyscale display. The 5mx keyboard is the best around at the moment.

What's bad?
Much more expensive than other, similarly featured, PDAs on the market.

Overall ★★★★★

WEBCAMS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 48)



Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

Philips Vesto Pro

Price
£60-£70 inc VAT

Contact
020 8689 4444 www.pcstuff.philips.com

What's good?
Attractive little camera, with a good resolution. Natural colour.

What's bad?
It's difficult to keep steady because the locking screw comes loose a lot.

Overall ★★★★★

Pinecam Z100

Price
£50

Contact
01908 218812 www.pinegroup.com

What's good?
Eh, a few controls to make your captures look a bit better?

What's bad?
Pretty much everything. No instructions, flimsy, difficult to operate.

Overall ★★

Logitech Quickcam Web

Price
£59.99

Contact
020 7309 0127 www.logitech.com

What's good?
As cute as you like. Get free Web space and streaming with Spotlife.

What's bad?
Average picture quality. TWAIN problems. Can prove a nightmare.

Overall ★★★

Creative WebCam Go Plus

Price
£129

Contact
01245 265265 www.europe.creative.com

What's good?
Innovative design. Can be used as a digital camera. Good range of features.

What's bad?
Expensive. The digital camera aspect is a tad gimmicky.

Overall ★★★★

Agfa CL18

Price
£100

Contact
0208 231 4903 www.agfa.co.uk

What's good?
A Webcam and digital camera. Can display images on a TV. Good value.

What's bad?
No LCD display. Not the best resolution in the world.

Overall ★★★★

EXTERNAL MODEMS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 49)

Hayes Accura 56k

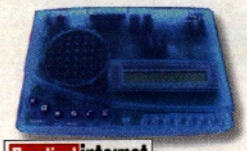
Price
£70

Contact
0870 720 006 www.zoomhayes.co.uk

What's good?
Fairly quick. From the original 'intelligent' modem makers.

What's bad?
Looks as dull as you like. Good, but in no way great.

Overall ★★★



Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

Olitech Self-Memory Pro

Price
£80

Contact
0870 720 006 www.euro-tech.co.uk

What's good?
Lets you retrieve POP3 email when your PC is turned off. Loads of features.

What's bad?
Unintuitive and unfriendly user interface.

Overall ★★★★★

Diamond Supra-Max 56 USB

Price
£50

Contact
01189 444400 www.diamondmm.co.uk

What's good?
Compact. Uses your PC's power supply to run. Fast.

What's bad?
Not that easy to use. No 'hands-free' phone usage here.

Overall ★★★★

Creative Labs Modemblaster Externa

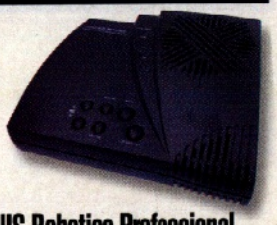
Price
£59

Contact
0800 973069 www.europe.creative.com

What's good?
Capable of turning your PC into a flexible answerphone.

What's bad?
Unusual styling. No USB. Works best with a microphone, which isn't supplied as standard.

Overall ★★★★



US Robotics Professional Message Modem

Price
£120

Contact
0800 225252 www.3com.co.uk

What's good?
2Mb of internal memory. Mic and speaker built-in.

What's bad?
Expensive, large and scary-looking.

Overall ★★★

WEB SITE DESIGN PACKAGES (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 50)

HoTMetaL Pro 6

Price
£79

Contact
020 8387 4110 www.hotmetalpro.com

What's good?
Inexpensive program with expensive-looking features

What's bad?
The integration of HTML might bamboozle beginners

Overall ★★★★

Adobe GoLive 5

Price
£229

Contact
020 8606 4000 www.adobe.co.uk

What's good?
Vastly impressive range of features. Easy to pick up and use

What's bad?
Not cheap. Still unlikely to win over Dreamweaver die-hards

Overall ★★★★

FrontPage Express

Price
Free

Contact
0345 002000 www.microsoft.com

What's good?
Free. Gives you decent Web pages

What's bad?
Nothing much in the way of advanced features

Overall ★★★

Dreamweaver 4

Price
£299+VAT

Contact
020 8358 5857 www.macromedia.com

What's good?
Millions of features. Will make even the most jaded of Webmasters excited

What's bad?
Costs over £300. Nothing much else really

Overall ★★★★★

NetObjects Fusion 5

Price
£205 + VAT

Contact
0800 0289851 www.netobjects.co.uk

What's good?
Easy to set up your own site in no time whatsoever

What's bad?
Expensive for beginners. Strangely difficult to use at times

Overall ★★★

SITE SUBMISSION SOFTWARE (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 54)

BuildTraffic Pro

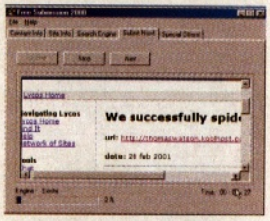
Price
£14

Contact
www.buildtraffic.com

What's good?
Cheap enough. Powerful and easy to use.

What's bad?
Unappealing interface. Exaggerated claims.

Overall ★★★★



Free Submission 2000

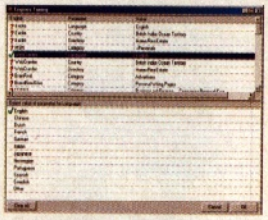
Price
Free

Contact
www.tweaknow.com

What's good?
It's free. Easy to pick up and use. Gets results.

What's bad?
Doesn't pack a massive range of features.

Overall ★★★



Site Submitter Pro

Price
£38

Contact
http://submitter.sitesoftware.com

What's good?
Allows you slightly more control than some other programs.

What's bad?
Not worth the money. Interface is sometimes fiddly.

Overall ★★

Web Site Traffic Builder

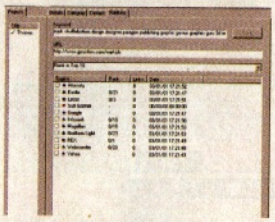
Price
£49.95

Contact
www.guildsoft.co.uk

What's good?
It's easy to use and gets results.

What's bad?
Pricier than other programs.

Overall ★★★★★



Submit Wolf Pro

Price
£99.95

Contact
www.trellian.com

What's good?
Does a good enough job.

What's bad?
Too many bloody wolf pictures.

Overall ★★★★

WEB ANIMATION PACKAGES (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 47)

LiveMotion 1.0

Price
£189+VAT

Contact
www.adobe.com

What's good?
Intuitive. Easy to get to grips with. Outputs SWF files. Has the standard Adobe interface.

What's bad?
Not quite as powerful as its Macromedia equivalent.

Overall ★★★★

Director 8

Price
£799

Contact
www.macromedia.com

What's good?
Unparalleled range of features. Capable of doing quite incredible things.

What's bad?
Not what you could ever call cheap. For experts only really.

Overall ★★★★

SWiSH 1.51

Price
$30 (approx £20)

Contact
www.swishzone.com

What's good?
Dead dead cheap. Lets you create Flash files quickly and easily.

What's bad?
Only works with text. Limited features.

Overall ★★★★

Flash 5

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

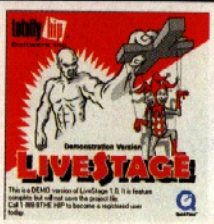
Price
£259

Contact
www.macromedia.com

What's good?
Impressive and powerful program. Creates animations and menus with tiny files.

What's bad?
The interface takes a bit of getting used to, and may infuriate newcomers.

Overall ★★★★★



LiveStage 1.0

Price
$300 (approx £200)

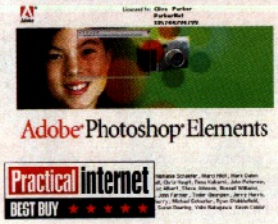
Contact
www.totallyhip.com

What's good?
Capable of excellent results. Uses something other than the Flash format.

What's bad?
Confusing interface. Not really that cheap.

Overall ★★★★

WEB GRAPHICS PACKAGES



Adobe Photoshop Elements

Price
£79

Contact
020 8606 4000 www.adobe.co.uk

What's good?
The greatest graphics program on the go, bar none. Unparalleled level of features. Cheap too!

What's bad?
Nothing. This is an excellent all round package suitable for all levels of PC user.

Overall ★★★★★

Photo Objects 50,000

Price
£59.99

Contact
01256 707767 www.hemera.com

What's good?
Brilliant collection of photographs, all vector-based, so you can blow them up to any size.

What's bad?
For sixty quid, what else do you want?

Overall ★★★★★

Fireworks 3

Price
£139

Contact
020 8358 5857 www.macromedia.com

What's good?
Very tasty at helping you make animated GIFs for menus and general Web site niceness.

What's bad?
Again, a tad on the pricey side. Quite overpowering for the beginner.

Overall ★★★★

Jasc Paint Shop Pro 7.0

Price
£79.95

Contact
01295 258335 www.digitalworkshop.co.uk

What's good?
Cheap, user-friendly and easy to use. A dream for those new to the world of graphics.

What's bad?
Doesn't offer the same depth of features as Photoshop.

Overall ★★★★

Adobe Illustrator 9.0

Price
£111

Contact
020 8606 4000 www.adobe.co.uk

What's good?
The vector graphics creation package of choice. Exceedingly powerful. Quite cheap.

What's bad?
Takes a good while to get the better of.

Overall ★★★★

ECOMMERCE PACKAGES (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 52)

eGenie

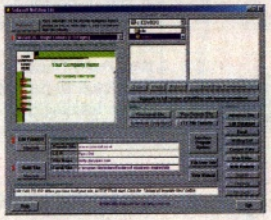
Price
£275

Contact
www.egenie.co.uk

What's good?
Beginner-friendly. Very easy to pick up and use.

What's bad?
Inflexible in the long run. Not what you could call cheap.

Overall ★★★



NetShop Lite

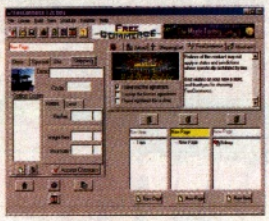
Price
£49

Contact
www.solarsoft.uk.com

What's good?
Easy to set up your site

What's bad?
Have to pay big money for secure transaction facilities.

Overall ★★★★



FreeCommerce

Price
Free

Contact
www.magicfactory.net

What's good?
It's free!

What's bad?
Has some completely bizarre idiosyncracies.

Overall ★★★★

Actinic

Price
£410

Contact
www.actinic.co.uk

What's good?
Unparalleled range of features and control. Produces stunning results.

What's bad?
Might seem a bit pricey to beginners.

Overall ★★★★★

ec Builder

Price
£351.33

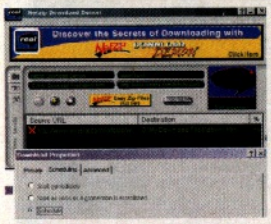
Contact
www.ecbuilder.co.uk

What's good?
An easy fill in the blanks approach. Lots of features and options.

What's bad?
Quite expensive. No password protection on the data files.

Overall ★★★★

DOWNLOAD MANAGERS (REVIEWED IN ISSUE 43)



NetZip Download Demon

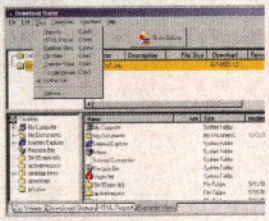
Price
$29.99

Contact
www.netzip.com/products/info_demon.html

What's good?
More than enough features to be getting on with. Sexy interface.

What's bad?
Not as good as Go!Zilla. Prone to odd glitches. Close, but no cigar.

Overall ★★★★



Download Butler

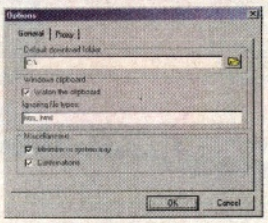
Price
$29.99

Contact
www.lincolnbeach.com/butler.asp

What's good?
A whole load of unique features. Very easy to set up.

What's bad?
Complex and poorly designed.

Overall ★



Mass Downloader

Price
Free

Contact
www.geocities.com/siliconvalley/vista/2865/md

What's good?
It's simple to use and significantly speeds up your downloads.

What's bad?
Features are thin on the ground and the user interface is not very 'friendly'.

Overall ★★★★

Go!Zilla

Price
Free

Contact
www.gozilla.com

What's good?
A truly wonderful free download manager that outperforms costly programs by a country mile.

What's bad?
Doesn't speed up your download time.

Overall ★★★★★

Mr Cool

Price
Free

Contact
www. netservs.com/mrcool

What's good?
An interesting idea that should make the download process more bearable.

What's bad?
Appaling interface, difficult to use. We couldn't get it to work.

Overall ★★

HOME COMPUTING HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER!

Start here...

If you're new to computing and the Net, you need clear, jargon-free help with the basics. That's what Paragon Publishing's 'Made Easy' magazines are for. These unique beginners' magazines, available from all good newsagents, are colourful, easy-to-understand and perfect for novices.

Windows Made Easy

Windows Made Easy is the ultimate resource for people who've just bought their first PC. Everything you need to know about Windows is explained in clear, jargon-free tutorials, and the magazine is crammed with hardware hints and tips.

Issue 39 on sale now

Word Made Easy

From the makers of Windows Made Easy comes this great guide to getting the most out of Microsoft Word. Over 132 pages, we show you everything you need to know about all versions of Word. Our easy tutorials will have you up to speed in no time.

On sale now

Web Pages Made Easy

Once you've figured out the basics of connecting to the Net, why not have a go at making your own Web site? Web Pages Made Easy is the magazine you need to do this. Issue 18 contains some great tips and tutorials for people building their first Web site.

Issue 18 on sale now

Digital Photography Made Easy

Taking great pictures with a digicam is easy, provided you've got the know-how. Every issue, DPME shows you, step-by-step, how to shoot amazing photos and enhance them on your computer. Includes a program-packed CD.

Issue 7 on sale now

made easy

Reserve them now...

TO SUBSCRIBE, CALL 01454 642442

123-reg.co.uk

Reserve your .biz, .name, .eu and .info domain name on-line now!

It's never been easier or cheaper to have your own domain name

*39p

Stunning price includes:

- Web forwarding • Catch-all e-mail forwarding
- Up to 100 e-mail forwarding addresses
- Holding page wizard • Change name servers
- Change IPS tags (UK domains)
- Full domain management

CHECK IT OUT FOR YOURSELF

123-reg.co.uk

* +registration fee: £2.50 per year. US domains: £2.29
+ registration fee: £6.70 per year. Prices exclude VAT

OUR PROMISE TO YOU ... Ours are the lowest prices in the world. We don't charge a transfer fee and we'll give you double the difference back if you find a cheaper price anywhere else.**

** See website for full terms

WEB TAPESTRY

Reseller Accounts from £25 per month

Colocation & Dedicated Servers from £99 per month

Linux & Windows 2000
PHP-4, MySQL, CGI bin
Real Server G2, MS Access
Frontpage2000,
ASP Scripting
& SSL

Web Hosting from £35 per year

FREE URL Forwarding
FREE Email Forwarding
NO Transfer fees
NO hidden extras

Domain Names
.co.uk £8.00
.com £19.99
For two years!

All prices exclude VAT

Call NOW 08000 15 17 18
www.webtapestry.co.uk

DOMAIN NAMES WITH SOMETHING EXTRA...

SupaNames.co.uk offer the UK's genuine best value hosting.
We use powerful UK based Linux servers with 99.9% average uptime.

Value Host Package from £13.99 pa
Your choice of domain
35mb of Linux webspace
1 x POP3 email account
PHP4 scripting
MySQL (databases)
CGI-BIN, SSI & WAP
Flexible visitor bandwidth
Expert email support
No set-up fee

Value Host PRO Package from £23.99 pa
Your choice of domain
35mb of Linux webspace
Unlimited POP3 email accounts
Unlimited Autoresponders
FREE Password Protected Directories
FREE FrontPage Extensions
MySQL (databases)
PHP4 scripting
CGI-BIN, SSI & WAP
Pre-installed CGI scripts
Flexible visitor bandwidth
Expert email support
No set-up fee

Domain names with full hosting from only £13.99

No other hidden charges or set-up fees.

Order online at: www.supanames.co.uk

"..certainly worthwhile.."
.net magazine.Oct 2000

Supa names.co.uk

Instant FREE account set-up at:

Prices exclusive of VAT

www.supanames.co.uk

WebFusion Seriously Easy Web Hosting

Sales Hotline 0115 9170000
or email: sales@webfusion.co.uk

WebFusion Reseller

prices exclude VAT

£50 p.m. OR £500 p.a.

ideal for: web designers, internet consultants, entrepreneurs...

the UK's best value reseller package

2000 MB Fast UK Web Space
2 Virtual Servers included, Add VS £25 p.a. each. 2000 POP3 Boxes. Detailed Online Help, Phone and E-mail Support. Regular Tape, Backups. Same Hour Setup

All Your Accounts have: Virtual Control Panel 2001, Unlimited E-mail Forwarding, Announcement Lists & Autoresponders, Full CGI-BIN, 3GB Bandwidth Allowance per Month, Support for Miva, PHP4, MySQL, ASP and RealAudio, MS Frontpage Extensions, Graphical Access Statistics

www.webfusion.co.uk

Wholly owned by Gillett Multimedia (est. 1993)

Web: www.ukdomains.net Tel: 01353 659696

UK DOMAINS

Dot Com Crashes !

Will the domain registrar you choose still be around at renewal time?

For complete peace of mind use the UK's longest established registration service

Genuine customer comments:

"Many thanks. Efficient as ever!"

"I have used many domain registers and thought you may like to know, your company is outstanding in every way"

"Thanks - You are most professional"

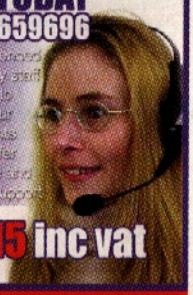
"It is nice to receive a fast & efficient service. It is a rare thing these days!"

"Wow! That was fast. Thanks!"

"Thankyou for providing a fast and efficient service, you are the only registration service I have used that always sends a VAT receipt in good time, (some never bother)."

CALL TODAY 01353 659696

Our experienced and friendly staff are happy to discuss your requirements and can offer free advice and technical support



Domain registration from £15 inc vat

Domain Registration | Website Hosting | Web Design | E-commerce

Member of Which? WebTrader Supported by the EEC

Nominet:uk — We are members of Nominet The UK Internet names organisation

Gillett Multimedia . Alexander House . 38 Fore Hill . Ely . Cambridge . CB7 4ZA

UKHosts.com

order online: http://www.ukhosts.com e-mail: sales@ukhosts.com tel: 07041 478141

domain hosting £65! +VAT pa

Includes 100mb Web Space, Own Control Panel Unlimited POP3 e-mail and e-mail forwardings FTP access, CGI-BIN, ASP, Ready Made Scripts

.co.uk £5! +VAT pa
* minimum 2 years

.com £12! +VAT pa
* register for up to 10 years

no hidden extras - all prices include all fees - no transfer charges

.eu.com £25! +VAT pa
secure yours today
* minimum 2 years
also uk.com, uk.net, gb.com,gb.net us.com, ru.com and many others

.tv now available £30! +VAT pa
excludes premium domains
* register for up to 10 years

order online: http://www.ukhosts.com e-mail: sales@ukhosts.com tel: 07041 478141

POWERFUL YET SIMPLE INTERNET SOLUTIONS

Simply Names

'Europe's Leading Domain Registrar'

- .co.uk .com .net .org plus EUROPEAN DOMAINS

.it ITALY .ru RUSSIA .fr FRANCE
.at AUSTRIA .ch SWITZERLAND .de GERMANY
.dk DENMARK .ro ROMANIA .lu LUXEMBOURG
.pl POLAND .be BELGIUM and many more...

Simply Hosting Quality Hosting & E-mail Accounts

Account-	Mail	Soho	Enterprise	Corporate
Web Space	×	50Mb	100Mb	150Mb
Pop3 Mail Boxes	✓	×	×	×
Email Forwarding	✓	✓	✓	✓
Email Aliases	✓	✓	✓	✓
Web Forwarding	✓	×	×	×
Unlimited FTP	×	✓	✓	✓
Cgi-Bin	×	✓	✓	✓
Site Statistics	×	✓	✓	✓
MySQL PHP SSI	×	×	✓	✓

Simply Servers

- Cobalt RAQ Servers
- Individually Configured UNIX Servers

Manage your accounts using our highly acclaimed control panel!

simplynames www.simplynames.com

Zone One, Malvern Hills Science Park, Malvern, WR14 3SZ UK Tel: +44 (0)1684 893020 e-mail: sales@simplynames.com

Beware of cheaper alternatives!

Honest, value for money domain name registration, domain management systems and virtual web hosting.
As well as .uk and .com registrations, visit our website for the latest news on .BIZ .INFO .NAME etc.

jp.com us.com eu.com au.com

FREE Telephone tech support

DOMAIN SERVICES
- ✓ Web Forwarding
- ✓ E-Mail Forwarding
- ✓ Meta Tag Creator
- ✓ URL Masking
- ✓ Online DNS Admin

Your own Cobalt RaQ server
@ competitive rates
FREE telephone support
Perfect for resellers
www.GoDedicated.net

LOOK AT WHAT YOU GET WITH OUR WEB HOSTING PACKAGES

Package	Startup	Economy	Business	Premier	Corporate
Webspace MB	5	15	50	100	200
POP3 E-Mail Boxes	5	10	15	20	30
Unlimited E-Mail Aliases	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E-Mail Autoresponders	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Web-based Administration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
24/7 FTP Access	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Telnet Access	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Unrestricted Bandwidth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Own CGI Directory	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Run Custom CGI Scripts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Graphical Site Statistics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tech Support (tel & email)	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
All this for only	£49pa	£59pa	£99pa	£149pa	£199pa
Options					
FrontPage Extensions	£20	£20	£20	£20	£20
MySQL	£30	£30	£30	£30	£30
PHP	£30	£30	£30	£30	£30
ASP	£30	£30	£30	£30	£30

more than just

Call today -
our friendly staff are ready to discuss your requirements or offer **free** technical support

0870 120 8888

CheapNames

order online @ www.cheapnames.co.uk

Names.co Internet plc. Britannia Court, 5 Moor Street, Worcester. WR1 3DB. All prices per annum exc. VAT. Cheques and major credit/debit cards accepted.

UK REG

UK's Best Value domain Name Registration Service

FREE e-mail forwarding
FREE Web forwarding
No extra charges if you wish to transfer your domain away

Bulk Domains Prices
Domains from just 20p includes UK and US names **20p**

UK DOMAINS
£0.49 .co.uk etc
Price does not include NIC fees
Nominet (UK domains per 2 years £5.00 +VAT)

US DOMAINS
£0.49 .com etc
Price does not include NIC fees
ICANN (US domains per 1 year £8.51 +VAT)

.info & .biz

domains are now available

The long awaited new domain names are now here.
Register yours online today!

Register online NOW at
www.ukreg.com

100% control of your domains via our online control panel

WebFusion Seriously Easy Web Hosting

Sales Hotline 0115 9170000
or email: sales@webfusion.co.uk

Business Pro Account

£199 PER YEAR

Includes Domain Fees
Free Same Hour Setup
24/7 Technical Support
Money Back Guarantee

for businesses that are really serious about the internet

100MB Fast UK-based Webspace, 100 POP3 Boxes, Unlimited Email Addresses, Auto-responders and Announcement Lists. Own CGI-BIN Plus Pre-installed Scripts. Automatic Graphical Access Statistics. Unlimited FTP Access. 24/7 Technical Support and Online Help. 3GB Bandwidth Allowance per Month. Your Own Domain Name (www.yourname.co.uk or .com) including Domain Registration Fees. Miva, PHP4, MySQL, ASP & RealAudio Support. Secure Server Access. FrontPage Extensions. Virtual Control Panel 2001 for Easy Administration. Free 60 Minute Setup.

30 Day MoneyBack Guarantee. prices exclude VAT

www.webfusion.co.uk

Wholly owned by Gillett Multimedia (est. 1993)

Web: www.ukdomains.net Tel: 01353 659696

UK DOMAINS

Dot Com Crashes !

Will the domain registrar you choose still be around at renewal time?

For complete peace of mind use the UK's longest established registration service

Genuine customer comments:

"Many thanks. Efficient as ever!"

"I have used many domain registers and thought you may like to know, your company is outstanding in every way"

"Thanks - You are most professional"

"It is nice to receive a fast & efficient service, It is a rare thing these days!"

"Wow! That was fast. Thanks!"

"Thankyou for providing a fast and efficient service, you are the only registration service I have used that always sends a VAT receipt in good time, (some never bother)."

CALL TODAY 01353 659696

Our experienced and friendly staff are happy to discuss your requirements and can offer free advice and technical support

Domain registration from £15 inc vat

Domain Registration | Website Hosting | Web Design | E-commerce

Member of Which? WebTrader Supported by the EEC

Nominet:uk — We are members of Nominet The UK Internet names organisation

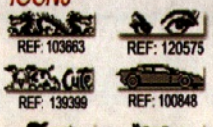
Gillett Multimedia . Alexander House . 38 Fore Hill . Ely . Cambridge . CB7 4ZA

NOKIA - Ringtones & Graphics **MOTOROLA & SAGEM** - Ringtones Only

RINGTONES & GRAPHICS

TOP RINGTONES	Ref	NOK.	MOT.	SAG.
1. STAN	105859	✓	✓	✓
2. NEXT EPISODE	138444	✓	✓	✓
3. SAY MY NAME	102937	✓	✓	✓
4. YOU MAKE ME SICK	118263	✓		
5. I WANNA BE YOU	143149	✓		✓

ICONS



REF: 103663 REF: 120575 REF: 139399 REF: 100848 REF: 111566 REF: 104645

only 75p per min

There's 1000s more to choose from!

09069 525 577

www.iconaphone.com

Calls cost 75p/min from landline. Mobile operators may charge more. Ask bill payers permission before calling. Av. call 2 mins. Iconaphone Box1896 WC1N 3XX. Before ordering check phone compatibility with our service or with your manufacturer. Customer service No 0870 121 9565.

LOW COST HIGH QUALITY HOSTING PACKAGE

From Only £30 Per Year

10mb Web Space
10 Pop Boxes
Stats Page
500mb Monthly Transfer
ASP, PHP, SQL, Frontpage
Telephone Support

StrongWeb

Domain Names

.co.uk £8.50
.com £28.99

All Domains Get
1 Year FREE URL Forwarding
FREE High Quality Dial-up Accounts
FREE Web Mail

0800 Internet Access, Only £12.75 A Month "Reduce Your Phone Bills Now"

Tel: 0800 915 9555 - Email: sales@strongnet.net

WWW.STRONGWEB.CO.UK

STRONGNET Ltd, 6 South Parade, Totton, Southampton, Hampshire SO40 3PY

All Prices Exclude VAT

NameHog

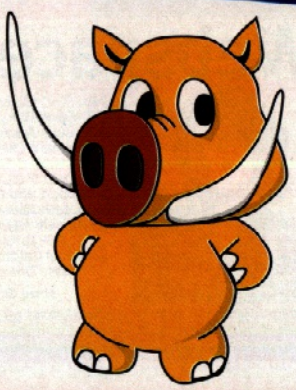
.info .biz .info .biz .info .biz .info .biz info .biz

NO Hidden Costs

.co.uk domains

£8.50

inc. all fees for 2 years



.com
.net .org

£27.50

web hosting for only £1.20 per Mb per year

all registrations include all registry fees for 2 years & all prices exclude VAT, there are NO hidden catches, NO extra costs & NO transfer fees.

No Catches FREE Setup

www.namehog.net - info@namehog.net

0870 9059 444

open from 8am till 10pm 7 days

uk REG

UK's Best Value domain Name Registration Service

FREE e-mail forwarding
FREE Web forwarding
No extra charges if you wish to transfer your domain away

Bulk Domains Prices
Domains from just 20p includes UK and US names 20p

UK DOMAINS
£0.49 .co.uk etc
Price does not include NIC fees
Nominet (UK domains per 2 years £5.00 +VAT)

US DOMAINS
£0.49 .com etc
Price does not include NIC fees
ICANN (US domains per 1 year £8.51 +VAT)

.info & .biz
domains are now available

The long awaited new domain names are now here.
Register yours online today!

Register online NOW at
www.ukreg.com

100% control of your domains via our online control panel

WebFusion Seriously Easy Web Hosting

Sales Hotline 0115 9170000
or email: sales@webfusion.co.uk

Webspace Made Easy

100MB Fast UK-based Webspace, POP3 Email Box, Unlimited Email Addresses, Auto-responders and Announcement Lists. Own CGI-BIN Plus Pre-installed Scripts. Automatic Graphical Access Statistics. FTP Access. 24/7 Tech Support and Online Help. 2GB Bandwidth Allowance per Month. Own Domain Name (.co.uk/.com). ASP & RealAudio Support. Virtual Control Panel 2001 for Easy Onine Administration.

Free 60 Minute Setup

Virtual Control Panel 2001 - Control Everything from the Web
Read & send email, autoinstall popular CGI scripts without programming knowledge. Setup email addresses, autoresponders & lists, upload files, and much, much more...

£9.95 PER MONTH
INCLUDING FREE, FRIENDLY, FAST TECH SUPPORT 24 HOURS A DAY

www.webfusion.co.uk

Mission?

Find another company offering these prices on compatible cartridges & inkjet supplies.....

Epson Cartridges		Hewlett Packard Cartridges	
Single Black	£2.49	HP51626A	£8.99
Single Colour	£3.99	HP51625A	£10.49
Five Black	£9.99	HP51629A	£8.99
Five Colour	£17.99	HP51649A	£12.99
Twin Pack (1Bk + 1Col)	£4.99	HP51645A	£8.99
Four Pack (2Bk + 2Col)	£9.49	C1823D	£14.49
Six Pack (3Bk + 3Col)	£13.49	C6578A	£22.49
Eight Pack (4Bk + 4Col)	£16.99	C6614D	£9.49
Canon Cartridges		**Lexmark Cartridges**	
BJC4000 (1Bk + 1Col)	£3.49	13400HC	£11.99
BC-02	£8.49	13619HC	£13.99
BC-05	£9.99	12A1970	£11.99
BC-20	£8.99	12A1980	£13.99
Inkjet Refills & Bulk Ink		**Inkjet Paper**	
Bk + Col Refill Kit	£11.99	Photo Gloss 160g (20)	£4.99
Black Refill Kit	£4.99	Photo Gloss 160g (50)	£12.99
Colour Refill Kit	£7.99	Inkjet Card 160g (100)	£9.99
Photo Colour Refill Kit	£5.99	Inkjet Card 210g (100)	£12.49
60ml Black	£3.49	Inkjet paper 100g(100)	£5.99
60ml C, M or Y	£3.99	T-Shirt Transfer (10)	£5.99
250ml Black	£9.99	CD Labels White (50)	£4.99
250ml C, M or Y	£11.99	Business Cards (250)	£3.99

All with FREE delivery (no minimum order)

.....We Know You`ll Find it

Impossible!

For these and 1000`s of other amazing deals on computer & printer products visit:

www.box-shift.co.uk

Protected by... VeriSign

• WEBSITE DESIGN •

Arachnoid Webs Limited

For all your internet solutions from full-time professionals

consultancy • e-commerce
special offers • quality service
imaginative design • competitive prices
database development • cost effective marketing

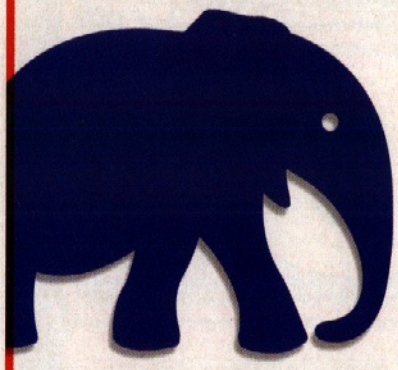
Don't be afraid of the World Wide Web

FREEPHONE 0800 027 8446

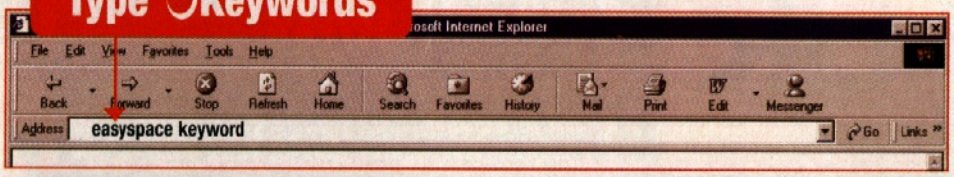
E-MAIL mail@arachnoidwebs.co.uk
WEBSITE www.arachnoidwebs.co.uk

Domains from £3.50 pa/$5 pa
inc. InterNIC / Registrar fees
.tv .com .net .co.uk .vg .tc .ac .nu

A new type of web address!



Type Keywords



...instead of this

domains-ecommerce-webhosting

Now your name is enough to find you online with Keywords!

They can simply type your Keyword directly into the address bar of Microsoft Internet Explorer and go straight to the specific keyword page on the **easyspace** website.

No more http://www, .com's or .co.uk's just type your Keyword i.e easyspace and hit return!

order online:

easyspace.com

First UK accredited ICANN registrar/ Keywords registrar

look 4 names

domain name registration made simple

.com .co.uk .net .org .tv .org.uk .net.uk .eu.com plus many more...

Register online at: **www.look4names.co.uk**

Run Your Own Web Hosting Company!

You can profit from selling web hosting to your existing clients, or start your own web hosting business instantly! Dot Com Avenue can provide you with a completely managed server, admin control panel to manage your clients, and each client has their own end-user control panel to manage their site. No technical knowledge required!

If you would like help in setting up your own web hosting business or automating your existing one then speak to one of our web hosting consultants today. Quote code ".NET01" and receive your first month of server rental free of charge to give your business a jump start!

www.dotcomavenue.com
Call Free: 0800 052 4860

internetbuff.co.uk

Competitive Pricing-Fast Efficient Service-After Sales Support

FLASH 5
Website Design
WAP site Design
internet buff
eCommerce
Animated Banners
Domain Name Registration and Hosting

- **30 day hosting *money back* guarantee**
- ***FREE* your-name.co.uk with each web-space hosting package**
- ***FREE* scripts installed to your CGI-bin**

Contact us today or look online for a no obligation quotation form. enquiries@internetbuff.co.uk
07711 329856 TPh Fax 0870 1387414

Interesting Devices Ltd

Free Gift with orders over £50. Choice of Playstation Memory card or Flashing Keyring. Just quote PRIFREE

PSXAMP MP3 Adapter

£29.99 +vat

MP3 & MPEG 3 are now the most searched for expressions on the internet. MP3 is a form of audio compression that can compress CD audio up to 10 times. Now you can store up to 12 hours of CD quality audio on to a single CD. To enable you to play back MP3 files you need special software on your PC or you need expensive dedicated hardware. If you own a Playstation the PSXAMP will allow you play your MP3 CDs at a much cheaper price than other dedicated hardware. You can edit and save your own playlists to standard playstation memory cards. For more information visit http://psxamp.co.uk

CopyALL 4.0

£99 +vat

CopyALL 4.0 is a SCSI Interface that allows you to control your SCSI drives without the need for a PC. Simply fit your CD Reader and CD Recorder into an external case and the CopyALL will simplify the CD duplication process for you. It leaves your PC free for you to use for more important things. 4 operation modes: "Copy", "Test", "Safe-Copy" & "Scan"
http://interesting-devices.com/copyall

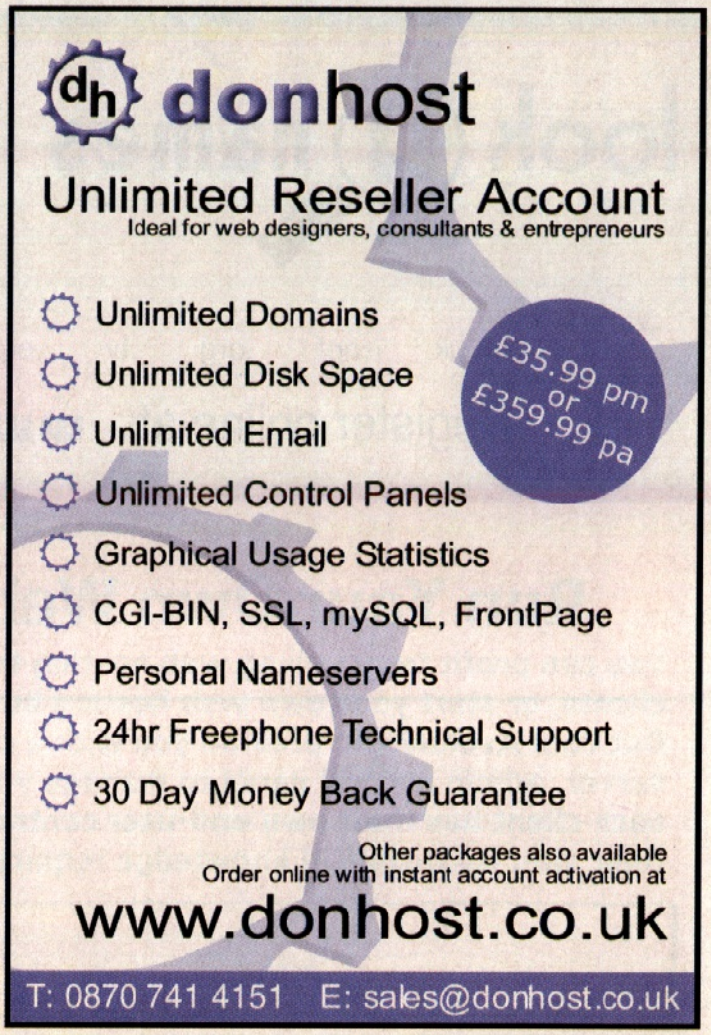
CD Recorders

£389 +vat

No PC required. 4x Write speed. 8 speed version also available for additional cost. All quality brand CD Recorders and CD Readers including Sony, Plextor, Yamaha etc. Can also be connected to your PC if you need to compile your own data (PC SCSI card required). Supplied with CD Recording software for the PC. Based on the above CopyALL SCSI interface

Vist our websites below for many more Interesting Devices 100s of devices for Playstation, Nintendo, Dreamcast and other electronic goods. Some too Hot to mention here.
Postage and Packaging = £2 small items £10 large items

Phone: 024 76339805 Fax: 024 76339804 Voice lines open 10am-4pm Mon-Fri
Interesting Devices
24 The Crescent
Keresley End
Coventry
CV7 8JT
http://interesting-devices.com
http://dvd-world.co.uk
http://psxamp.co.uk
http://z64.co.uk



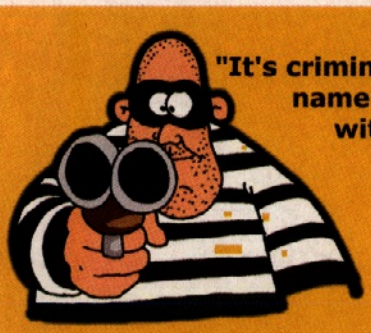
Got a web site but no traffic?

We offer:
No Placement, No Fee!
Guaranteed Listings
Customised Packages
Monthly Reports

Rank4U
The Search Engine Specialists

We also offer a range of other services from hosting to web design. Complete solutions from as little as £150!

www.rank4u.com **0700 590 5145**



"It's criminal how some domain name companies get away with what they do...I'm glad to have found your service"
- JTN customer

Feeling robbed over your domain names ?

We are now seeing more people transfer their domains **into** our service at a faster rate than at any time.

Whether your old ISP has gone to the wall or you're simply not getting the service you want why not try us with a domain or two and enjoy our robust and reliable service for yourself?

We're backed by MetroNet - one of the longest established ISPs in the UK - and our clear pricing and enduring service is designed to give you the confidence back in making the most of your domains.

Not any old name...

Just-the-name.co.uk

payah

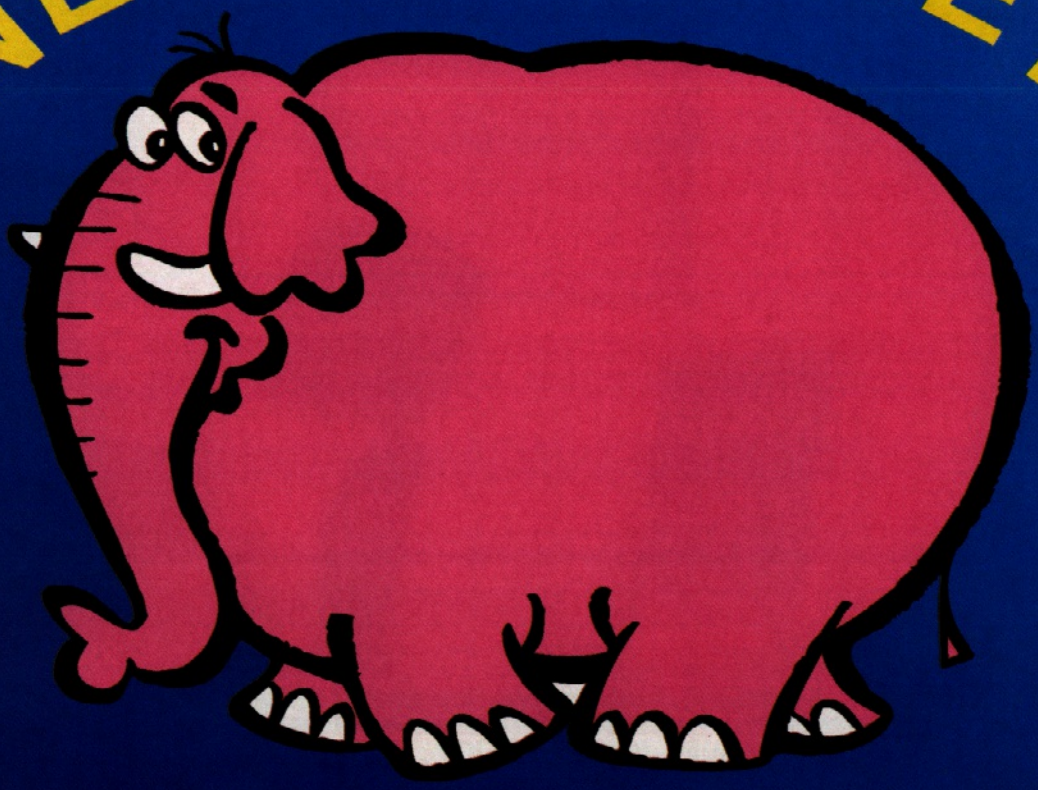
Imagine...

a web hosting service where there are no annual contracts, no hidden fees, which lets you host unlimited domains and offers you online automated control over your webspace and bandwidth all from £3.99 a month...then imagine no more...

Pay-as-you-host.com

"It's web hosting, but not as you know it !"

NEVER FORGET



www.evenmore.net

Absolutely Free
Online Web Site Creator

Makes up to a 10 page web site in minutes
No programming knowledge required
Free easy to use templates
Makes as many changes as needed free of charge
Free internal domain name and free 28 day hosting
Automated hyper-links (the links to the pages within your site)
Optional fully automated customer enquiry form
Advanced users may use optional HTML
No external advertising on your site
Optional free submission to over 500 search engines at the click of a button

www.evenmore.net

NEXT MONTH

Save time, money and effort – get October's Practical Internet

ON SALE SEPTEMBER 20

Packed with tips, advice and features to guarantee you get the most out of your Net connection, *Practical Internet*'s October issue will be a must-read. Along with news of the latest Web software, sites and services, we'll have exciting new tutorials and features that will show you clearly how to use the Net smarter.

EXCLUSIVE CD SOFTWARE

Don't miss out on another fantastic value-packed CD-ROM, filled with exclusive fully working programs. October's free CD will also come with a premium collection of browsing, Web building and email tools.

RESERVE YOUR COPY OF Practical internet

GUARANTEE A COPY OF PRACTICAL INTERNET EVERY MONTH BY HANDING THIS FORM TO YOUR LOCAL NEWSAGENT

Please reserve me a copy of Practical Internet (ISSN 1366-7661) priced £4.99 on a regular basis. Practical Internet is published 13 times a year.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Postcode .....

Phone Number .....

The next issue of PRACTICAL INTERNET is available on 20 September, 2001

*Newsagent information: Practical Internet is published by Paragon Publishing Ltd (tel: **01202 299900**, fax: **01202 299955**, **www.paragon.co.uk**) and is available from your local wholesaler. Practical Internet is distributed by Seymour (Tel: **01202 299 9232**) and is fully SOR.*

Please note: All contents are in an advanced stage of preparation, but circumstances may prevent publication.

BACK ISSUES

INCREASE YOUR NET KNOW-HOW BY ADDING TO YOUR PRACTICAL INTERNET COLLECTION. MANY ISSUES, PACKED WITH FEATURES AND REVIEWS, ARE STILL AVAILABLE FOR JUST £4.99 EACH

Issue 46

Get a free book about creating 3D Web graphics and the full version of Cool 3D on the CD. We also reveal the Web's fastest, most accurate search engine.

• **Price: £4.99 incl. p&p**

Issue 47

It's all about the money, you know. We show you how to use the Net to make yourself some lovely wonga. Plus, we take a serious look at online porn.

• **Price: £4.99 incl. p&p**

Issue 48

We sort 50 of your worst Net nightmares, providing easy solutions to common problems. We also provide useful advice on how you can better use the Net.

• **Price: £4.99 incl. p&p**

Issue 49

Add some juice to your Net connection. We show you how you can zoop up your browser. We also test 15 ISP tech support desks to see who was the most helpful.

• **Price: £4.99 incl. p&p**

Issue 50

We proudly present 50 of the best Internet programs, all of which are on the free cover CD. There's also plenty of reviews, tutorials and handy tips.

• **Price: £4.99 incl. p&p**

Issue 51

Don't let the Net dictate to you, we show you how to take control of your browser. We also bring you lots of tutorials and great software on the cover CD-ROM.

• **Price: £4.99 incl. p&p**

Issue 52

We present 101 ways of transforming your Web site from a humdrum page into HTML nirvana. Also, check out our 32-page online business section.

• **Price: £4.99 incl. p&p**

Issue 53

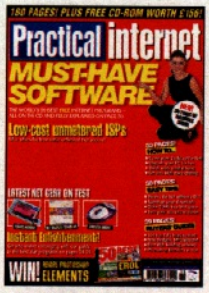
The Internet isn't just about receiving information – it's about sharing it. So why not get online and talk to like-minded people about the subjects that interest you?

• **Price: £4.99 incl. p&p**

Issue 54

We show you how to increase the speed of your Net connection, so you spend less time waiting and more time doing the things you want to do online.

• **Price: £4.99 incl. p&p**



Issue 55

Save loads of download time as we present the world's 50 top free Net programs, all on the cover disc. Plus read the special feature on choosing low cost unmetered ISPs.

• **Price: £4.99 incl. p&p**

Issue 56

Find out how to build a fully interactive Web site the easy way. Also, how to use the Net abroad and pick bug-free email software programs – five of which are on the CD.

• **Price: £4.99 incl. p&p**

Issue 57

Always wanted to five ADSL a try but couldn't afford it? We look at how you can get broadband access for £20, plus examine some of the best Web innovations.

• **Price: £4.99 incl. p&p**

Practical Internet back issues

YOUR DETAILS

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....Postcode: .....

Telephone No: .....

Email: .....

I WOULD LIKE TO ORDER:

☒ ISSUE 46	☒ ISSUE 49	☒ ISSUE 52	☐ ISSUE 55
☐ ISSUE 47	☒ ISSUE 50	☐ ISSUE 53	☐ ISSUE 56
☐ ISSUE 48	☒ ISSUE 51	☒ ISSUE 54	☐ ISSUE 57

(£4.99 including postage and packaging. Subject to availability)

METHOD OF PAYMENT (no cash please)

Please indicate your choice of method

☐ CHEQUE *Please make payable to Paragon Publishing Ltd.*

☐ CREDIT CARD

☐ Delta ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Switch

Card number:

☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | ☐☐ *If applicable*

Expiry date: ☐☐/☐☐

Issue No. ☐☐ *(Switch only)*

Signature: .....

Date: .....

*Please return this order form or a photocopy of it together with your cheque/postal order (if applicable) to the following address: Paragon Publishing Ltd, FREEPOST (SWB1565), Patchway, Bristol, BS32 0ZZ. It won't cost you a penny in stamps if posted in the UK. Alternatively, call the subscription hotline on **01454 642442**, fax your order on **01454 620080** or email us at **pi@cisubs.co.uk***

From time to time, Paragon sends out news about exciting new products and opportunities that are of interest to our readers. If you do not wish to receive such information, please tick this box.

Call our credit card hotline on 01454 642442

CHAT ROOM PERVS

JO CHIPCHASE ASKS: WILL THIS BE THE NEXT MORAL PANIC?

As someone who's far from being an avid soap fan, I was grabbed by a mid-July plot in *Coronation Street*, in which a teenage girl – Sarah Louise Plat, played by Tina O'Brien – was enticed to the house of a Net perv after meeting him in a chat room. The perv, who masqueraded as a 16-year-old laddo, was really a dodgy older man with evil intentions.

According to acerbic IT industry publication, The Register (**www.theregister.co.uk**), *Coronation Street* decided to screen the plot to highlight the issue of online crime and, in particular, the risk of children being 'groomed' by pervs who pose as youngsters in chat rooms. (Note that it may soon be made a jailable offence for an adult to assume the false identity of a minor in a chat room.) Similar issues have recently been brought to the fore by the *Tonight with Trevor MacDonald* show and Carol Vordermann, who got vociferous about it in the tabloids. *Coronation Street* and The Register (rightly) agree that the dangers of chat room pervs are better conveyed by credible Tina O'Brien than by middle-aged correspondents.

Sarah Louise Platt tells a cautionary tale with Net chat...

However, could this be the next moral panic? A report on the Internet Crime Forum (**www.internetcrimeforum.org.uk**) suggests that the risk of children being approached in this way through the Net is difficult to establish. It says (with slight paraphrasing on my part): "Evidence suggests a growth in criminal activity of this nature over recent years, although the number of known cases to date is low in proportion to the rapidly growing rate of Internet use, and that the danger of online solicitation by a stranger is thought to be relatively much lower than offline risk from someone known to the victim." Of course, we mustn't discard or trivialise the issue... but let's not get it out of perspective either.

Meanwhile, when asked whether the recent 'issue-led storyline' could have caused disproportionate fear of chat rooms amongst parents, Zoe Cartell at the *Coronation Street* press office said: "We don't think that will be case, as first and foremost *Coronation Street* is an entertainment programme. We worked with the government task force, child psychologists and Childnet, to ensure the issue was accurately portrayed. We think it's a fairly new phenomena, and we had a lot of calls from viewers who are interested in it. We're not there to alarm people, just to inform them of the potential dangers."

Parents who threw a wobbler after watching the show, and decided to conduct first-hand research into what goes on in chat rooms, would most likely be struck by the mundane-ness of it all. In many cases, chat rooms are populated by folk with too much time on their hands.

Yes, it drew attention to a potential issue but, at the end of the day, its prime concern is ramping up the ratings, rather than doing the nation's parents a public service. So, enjoy some safe and happy online chatting and remember that, if in doubt, Lara Croft (who has become more busty of late) will entice your kiddies off the PC and on to the relative safety of the PlayStation.

***Jo Chipchase runs Can-U-Hack-It, a Brighton-based new media company, and is a regular editorial contributor to* Practical Internet**

Practical internet

Paragon House, St Peter's Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 2JS
Tel +44 (0) 1202 299900
Fax +44 (0) 1202 299955
Email: pi@paragon.co.uk

CUSTOMER SERVICES
If you have a problem with any aspect of this magazine – from competition enquiries to damaged copies or missing covermounts, please contact our **Customer Services Manager**, Karen Wyatt on 01202 200200, or email subs@paragon.co.uk

MAGAZINE TEAM
Editor Mark Newman
pi@paragon.co.uk
01202 200250
Managing Editor Geoff Harris
Technical Editor Thomas Watson
Senior Designer Paul Blachford
Assistant Designer Lee Watkins
Senior Sub Editor Jo Cole
Staff Writer James Thornton

CONTRIBUTORS
Jo Chipchase, Chris Ellison, Gerard Liston, James Seabright, Clive Parker, Danny McAleer, Clive Hawkins, Martin Pipe

COVERDISC SUPPORT
Coverdisc Support
If you have any difficulty with our coverdisc, please refer to the disc pages for contact information
Cover CD Production
Tom Cairns
01202 209341
tomc@paragon.co.uk
Multimedia Editor
Lee Cornish

ADVERTISING
Advertising Manager Jennie Brown
(01202 200212)
jennieb@paragon.co.uk
Ad Sales Executive Jennifer Ross
(01202 200220)
jennyr@paragon.co.uk
Adv Sales Executive Robert Forsyth
(01202 209363)
robertf@paragon.co.uk
Copy Controllers Jo Dieppe, Lorraine Troughton

PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION
Production Manager
Dave Osborne
Bureau Manager Chris Rees
Scanning/prepress Liam O'Hara
Circulation Manager Tim Harris
Tel: +44 (0) 1202 200200
Fax: +44 (0) 1202 200217

INTERNATIONAL LICENSING
Practical Internet magazine is available for licensing overseas. For details, please contact:
International Manager Cathy Blackman
Tel: +44 (0) 1202 200205
Fax: + 44 (0) 1202 200235
Email: cathb@paragon.co.uk

DIRECTORS
Editorial Director Damian Butt
Production Director Jane Hawkins
Circulation & Marketing Director Kevin Petley
Advertising Director Peter Cleall
Art Director Mark Kendrick
Finance Director Steven Boyd
Managing Director Mark Simpson

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Subscription rates (13 issues) UK £36 Europe £55 World £81

Printed by Southernprint Web Offset, 17-21 Factory Road, Poole, BH16 5SN
Distributed by Seymour Ltd, 1st Floor, 86 Newman Street, London W1P 3LD
Tel: 0207 3968000

All text and layout remains the copyright of Paragon Publishing Ltd. *Practical Internet* cannot accept responsibility for any unsolicited material or transparencies. *Practical Internet* is fully independent and its views are not those of any company mentioned herein. All copyrights and trademarks are recognised and all images are used for the purpose of criticism and review only. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. Practical Internet can accept no responsibility for inaccuracies or complaints arising from adverts within the magazine.

© 2001 Paragon Publishing Ltd

Practical Internet
ISSN 1366-7661

ABC AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS
19,150 January-June 2000

NEW VIRUS PROTECTION FOR YOUR EMAIL

host unlimited domains

NEW 100 MBit Internet Connection

Multi-Million Pound Onsite Data Centre in association with the Intel Corporation

Windows 2000 Servers

Powerful web based Control Panel

DOMAIN LISTING

100% control over all your domains via the Control Panel V4

LIVE STATS

Host Unlimited Domains with the Reseller Account

for a flat monthly fee.

FREE INSTANT SET UP
£50 PER MONTH or £500 PA

All our hosting accounts support the following features:

- Windows 2000 servers running IIS 5
- Full support for ASP 3
- Full support for Microsoft Frontpage 2000 Extensions
- Full Perl Support
- Private CGI-BIN for each domain name
- Livestats – Realtime statistics for your websites
- Virus Protection for your email
- UK's most advanced Virtual Control Panel allowing central maintenance of all your domains
- Set up a private label Control Panel for your customers
- Servers housed in our onsite multi million pound Data Centre
- Advanced Password Protection on your site
- SQL Server
- Instant on-line setup
- 24 x 7 Telephone & E-mail Support

Business & Personal Accounts available from £60 PA

fasthosts

The power behind web hosting

Call 01452 541260

www.fasthosts.co.uk

24 hrs 7 days a week 24 Technical Support

intel premier PROVIDER 2001

Anyone can host your website. That's the problem.

However big or small your website, you need a reliable host. That's where Claranet comes in. The UK's largest independent Internet Service Provider guarantees you 24/7 support and a comprehensive range of packages. Choose from entry level at £29.99* p.a., to a fully featured, interactive solution at £699.00* p.a. Make your website really work for you, contact Claranet. No problem.

clara.net

theinternetserviceproviderthatactuallyprovidesaservice

www.clara.net/clarahost 0845 355 1000

*Clarahost Light £29.99 inc. VAT, Clarahost Advanced £699.00 exc. VAT.